

THE
CONTEMPT
OF THE
CLERGY

CONSIDERED.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

By an Impartial HAND.

J'appelle un Chat, un Chat : & Rolet un Fripon. Boileau.



D U B L I N :

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 IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

By J. IMBERT.



Printed by J. Imbert, in London.



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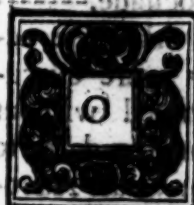
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 in the Strand, opposite the Theatre Royal.



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THE
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CONSIDERED.

Dear SIR,



OUR late Conversation at --- hath made a strong Impression upon me ever since. As my natural Taciturnity inclined me rather to hear than to talk, I was the more attentive to what passed, and am more able to recollect the many just and sprightly Things that were said by others. And as I have no Aversion from Religion in general, nor to any particular Order or Body of Men, I may perhaps be able to judge more impartially of the Subject before us than some of the Company, who seemed rather to express their Prejudice and Resentment, than their cool impartial Sentiments of Men and Things.

You could not (I dare say) help observing Sir Harry's Behaviour on the Occasion; he declaimed without mercy, he libelled and aggravated like a Bill in Chancery, in such a Manner and in such Language, as I could never have expected from his natural Candor and good Understanding; but I since understand, he hath been

foiled in his late Ruffle with the Doctor, and that the Bishop of----hath raised his Fine in the last Renewal of his great Lease. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* And when a Man's Passions have been raised by Self-interest and Vanity, no wonder they are not to be composed by Reason, and Justice. For my own Part, altho' I am not so staunch a Believer, nor so good a Christian, as perhaps I ought to be, yet I believe in God, and endeavour to serve him to the best of my Knowledge: I have an entire and cordial Benevolence for all my Fellow-creatures, especially my own Species, which obligeth me to perform all the Duties of a good Citizen, a good Neighbour, and a good Friend. I consider all Mankind as my Brethren, I would never neglect or forsake a Friend, nor injure or oppress an Enemy. *Hæmo sum, & nihil humani a me alienum puto.* And have always made it the inviolable Rule of my Conduct, to do to every Man, as I could wish they should do unto me: And therefore, altho' a Lay-man and a Free-thinker, I have no more Aversion from a black Coat, than I have from a red one, and think a Rose Hatband as inoffensive to a Man of Sense as a Cockade.----- And to deal plainly with you, I did not think the accused Party had fair Play among us, they were executed without legal Evidence, and condemned without legal Proof. Not a Man in their Company dared to speak in their behalf, much less to appear as an Advocate for them, to traverse the Indictment, to cross-examine the Witnesses, to put the most candid and equitable Construction upon suspicious Appearances. A Privilege, which the Law allows to the vilest Criminal. So that we were, in short, more like a Court of Inquisition, than an impartial Court of Justice; we were Parties and Judges at the same Time. I could not help thinking this a very unreasonable Way of proceeding, and therefore resolved at my leisure to give the Cause a Re-hearing in my own Court of Conscience, and communicate my Thoughts to you, whom I know to be, as well as my self, a Friend to Truth and Justice, and a Lover of Mankind.

I smile

I smile to myself to think what a hearty Laugh you and your merry Neighbour will have upon perusing this Epistle, and how many scurvy Jokes will be crack'd over this poor Head of mine, that I of all Men living should at this Time of Day turn Advocate for the Clergy, whose Degeneracy and Corruptions you have so often heard me condemn. But pray, Gentlemen, compose your Muscles, and be serious for half an Hour. Remember I take no Fee. We proceed *in forma pauperis*, I undertake the Cause with the same Disinterest, as some of our Brethren did poor *Woolston's* Case, who was persecuted almost to Death for nothing at all but a little Blasphemy, as the Believers call it. I pretend to no more than to open the Cause as a *Puisne Council*, which perhaps may be seconded and supported by some Person of greater Abilities.

In managing this Debate, I shall consider the Church of *England* only as a human legal Establishment, and the Clergy as a Society or Body incorporate by a Royal Charter, endowed with certain Privileges and Immunities, as the *South-Sea* and *Indian* Companies, or the Bank of *England*. Their Pretensions to a more ancient Establishment founded on a Charter from Heaven, is an Article that doth not come so properly before us; I shall therefore leave it to be defended by themselves, before more competent Judges. Consider them only as a Society incorporate by Charter, they have certainly a legal Right to all the Privileges conveyed by that Charter, until it be recalled by a competent Authority, which in Equity and good Policy ought not to be, until it either appear to be inconsistent with the publick Good, or that by Male-Practice they have forfeited their Title to those Privileges, the Favour of their Prince, and the Protection of the Law.

The Being of a God, and the Necessity of Religion and religious Worship, under some Form or other, hath been the universal Belief of all Ages and all Nations, which necessarily implies a Separation of certain Times, Places, Things and Persons from common Use, to be devoted and appropriated to that Service. On which Account, in the most early Records,

we meet with *Temples, Sacrifices, Altars, Festivals, Priests, &c.* dedicated to the Service of their respective Deities. To offer at a particular and distinct Proof of this evident Truth, would be an Affront to a Person of your Learning and good Sense, and to the Credit of universal History and Tradition. The absurd Cavils, that have been made against it, are too trifling to deserve a serious Answer. Whether this universal Agreement of Mankind were owing to a general or particular Revelation from Heaven, or from the apparent Usefulness of Religion to promote the Welfare of Mankind, and the Ends of civil Government, hath been disputed. But to me there seems to be a strong Presumption that it was owing to both, and that the one was the Consequence of the other. Now if the Institution of Religion be owing to so divine an Original, and if Reason and Experience shew it to be of such real Advantage to Mankind, no wonder it hath ever been regarded by wise and good Governors, as the great Blessing and Support of Government, and been defended and protected accordingly. And this could never be done, but by making it a national Establishment, and guarding it by proper Laws and Sanctions from the Invasions and Contempt of the Profligate and Prophanes: And that this was the Case in fact, we affirm, and humbly presume cannot easily be disproved.

We come now, in the first Place, to a distinct Examination of the general Charge brought against the Clergy, and the particular Allegations brought to support it.

Secondly, to consider what may, and ought to be fairly produced, to remove or extenuate the Guilt, with which they are charged, and to fix it with all its infamous Consequences, where it ought to rest.

The gloomy Mr. *W-----*, whom you know to be a great Dealer in Suspicions, secret History, and fly
In-

Innuendo's, began with several unlucky Quotations from *Tacitus* and *Salust*, which he imagined every body knew how to apply to Parallels among our selves. He grumbled much, about *Sacerdotia Venalia*, and told us how often the High Priesthood among the Jews had been bought and sold to the best Bidder. He might have added too, that the *Roman* Empire it self had been set to Sale, as other States and Kingdoms have been since. But what is all this to the Purpose? This proves nothing; this is only supposing and insinuating Crimes too gross to be believed, too dangerous to be directly charged without Proof, and impossible to be proved. Nor, indeed, was there any Occasion for *Suspicious* and *Innuendo's*, there were too many Articles directly charged, and some of them too plainly proved to be defended or excused, but not enough to support so general an Accusation as is brought against the whole Order. Some of these Articles more immediately concerned the superior Orders, the Prelates and Dignitaries, Others, the parochial Clergy, Rectors, Vicars, and Curates. Those against the Superior, were,

I. Ambition and Avarice.

II. Their servile Application and Attachment to Men in power.

III. The corrupt Use they make of their Revenues, their misapplying the Patrimony of the Church, which was designed for the Support of Charity and Hospitality, to Luxury and Vanity; and filling the most valuable Preferments with their own Children, Relations, and Sycophants, without any Respect so much as to a *Cæteris Paribus*.

IV. Their Non-Residence, Pluralities, and Comendams.

Those against the Inferior were general, indefinite, random Accusations, such as Pride, Pedantry, Ill-manners,

ners, Hypocrisy, Neglect of their Cures, and a long—
long—*&c.*

Sir *Harry*, whose long Attendance on Parliament, and thorough Knowledge of Affairs in high Life made him better able to judge of Persons and Facts than the rest of the Company, undertook to prove the several Articles, by a long Induction of particular Instances, many of which it must be owned were too notorious and scandalous to be denied or defended. But these were all particular Cases, personal Crimes, which justly consign the Guilty to Shame and Repentance, but do by no Means affect the whole Body or Society, or the Charter, by which they are supposed to subsist; it would be thought in all other Cases a very unreasonable Way of proceeding, to charge the Faults of a few unworthy Members upon the whole Society. Nay farther, if a corrupt wicked Majority should be thought a sufficient Reason for destroying any corporate Body, Society, Order, or Profession of Men, some of our Acquaintance ought to look to themselves, and be at least as sagacious as Rats to fly from a falling House. It would be endless to review and examine the several Facts charged against particular Persons, some of which I fear, nay, I know to be too true; I shall only consider the general Charge against the whole Body, and see how far they may and ought to be defended, and how little Ground there is for the Clamours raised against them.

The *Ambition and Avarice of the Clergy*, hath, at all Times, been the Cry of those, that hate them and wish the Destruction of their Order. The Authors and Promoters of the Charge of *Ambition* seem little to understand the Meaning of the Word, or the Nature of the Crime, with which they charge them. The Words *Ambire*, *Ambitus*, and *Ambitio* in classick Writers are well known to express a very different kind of Guilt than can with Justice be charged upon our *Clergy*. They were rather intended to express the undue and illegal Use, great Men and over-grown Subjects made of their Wealth and Power, to influence their Inferiors and Dependants in Prejudice to the Freedom of Elections, and the Liberties

erties of the People, who, (especially in the Times of the *Roman Commonwealth*) had the Power of bestowing the great Offices of the State, by a Majority of Votes, on their most deserving Fellow-Citizens, of whose Merit they were supposed to be the proper Judges, in the Discharge of which Trust they were to regard nothing but the real Merit of the several Competitors. Whosoever, therefore, made use of his Interest or Power to create Dependencies, or corrupt Influences to prejudice the Integrity of the Electors, and the Freedom of Elections, was said *Ambire*; and the Nature of his Crime was express'd by the Word *Ambitus*, against which many Laws were made, with the same good Intention, and the same good Success as our Acts of Parliament to prevent *Bribery and Corruption*. But can the very Appearance of such a Crime as this be charged upon our Clergy? -----Are our Bishops chosen by the Votes of the Majority? Every body knows the Contrary; if not, what Ground, what Room is there for such an Accusation?

Well! but (say their Enemies) if they are not guilty of the Crime in this particular limited Sense, here explained; yet, (which is quite the same Thing) they are always coveting and aiming at the great Posts, and honourable Offices in the Church, watching every Opportunity, and imploying all their Interest and Abilities to obtain them. Be it so.----Must this be imputed to them as a Crime? Is not this as great an Objection to every other Order and Society of Men as against the *Clergy*? Let us look into the Army, the Fleet, the Courts of Justice, the City, the corporate Companies, and every petty Country-Corporation in great *Great Britain*, you will find just the same Emulation, the same Competitions, the same Thirst of Glory, the same Desire of Preheminence as among the *Clergy*; only with this Difference, that to them it is never imputed as a Crime, and to the *Clergy* always.

Let us now consider the Equity of this Censure, and see why the same equitable Censure should not be made for all alike. It is true, that there are, there must be in every regular Society, different Offices and Stations

Stations adapted to the different Talents and Capacities of their Members. A State of direct Parity and absolute Equality cannot be a State of Nature and Order, and can never subsist, but in weak Heads and strong Imaginations. A Society without some Sort of Government is a meer *Ens rationis*, a chimerical Notion. Government without Laws, and Laws without a legislative and executive Power is direct Absurdity and Contradiction. Some must govern, and others be governed: Some must command, and others obey: Some must direct, and others submit to Direction. This is the very Voice and Order of Nature. Now therefore, if in every regular Society there must be Offices of Eminence and Distinction, to be filled by the most deserving Members, for the Benefit and Support of the Whole; can it be a Crime in any individual Member to endeavour to qualify himself, by superior Merit, for those superior Stations? and thereby recommend himself to the Notice and Esteem of those, who are able to advance him? Surely no. This is a laudable Emulation, or *Ambition* if you please, inseparable from great and ingenuous Minds. This is the great Spur to Industry, the great Incentive to generous and arduous Designs. Without this, Arts and Sciences, Manufactures and Trades, Navigation and Commerce, and every Branch of social and publick Virtue must languish and decay.----The raw Apprentice supports, with Cheerfulness, a seven Years Servitude and Subjection, with the Hopes of being at last his own Master, and of receiving the same Honour and Service from his Juniors as he hath paid to his Seniors. He sometimes fancies himself Warden, and then Master of his Company; and at last Sheriff or Lord-Mayor of the City. The young Cadet who lifts himself in the Fleet or Army without Pay, and seems to have nothing at Heart, but Glory and Drubbing, hath no inward Affection for Wounds, and Scars, and wooden Legs; hath no violent Passion for Hunger and Thirst, Heat and Cold, long Marches, inhospitable Quarters, bloody Battles, and desperate Sieges; but through Difficulties, *per Ardua*, is the Path to Glory and Preferment, a Regiment

ment and a Truncheon, if not a Star and Garter, are the ultimate Objects he hath in view, which sweetens every Labour and Danger of that difficult and desperate Service. The young Student at the Inns of Court, that hath the least grain of Spirit and Gessius, cannot help fancying himself capable of obtaining the highest Posts in the Law, and therefore hopes and endeavours to deserve and obtain them. His Spirits rise, and Heart glows with a generous Ardour at those Ensigns of Dignity and Grandeur, which attend the Lord High Chancellor of *Great Britain*; and not one in a thousand is humble enough to fancy himself incapable of deserving and obtaining them. In short, this innocent Vanity, this generous Emulation is the natural Root, the real Ground of all political Virtue and publick Spirit. It is this, and this only that distinguishes the Generous and the Brave, the Learned, and the Worthy, from the Ignorant, the Lazy, the Indolent and Undeserving in all Ranks, Orders, and Professions of Men. And must that generous Emulation, which is the Glory and Support of every other Order and Profession of Men, be thought criminal only in the Clergy! Must they only be afraid to excel! Doth either Law or Gospel oblige them to renounce the great and honourable Offices peculiar to their Order! The Apostle tells us, *1 Tim. iii. 1. This is a true saying, that if any Man desire the Office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work.* And therefore the Desire of such an Office must be a good and laudable Desire. He proceeds to shew what are the proper Qualifications requisite for that high Office; and surely it can be no Offence against Modesty and Decency, for worthy Men so qualified to endeavour by worthy Means to obtain the honourable Rewards of distinguished Merit, superior Learning, Greatness of Mind, Probity of Manners, and Sanctity of Life. It was long ago observed by *Salust**, That the Desire of Honour, and Glory, and Power

* Nam gloriam, honorem, imperium bonus & ignavus æquè sibi exoptant; sed Ille verâ viâ nititur, huic quia bonæ desunt artes, dolis atque fallaciâ contendit. *Sal.*

was natural, and therefore innocent. The Virtuous, and the Vitious, the Coward and the Brave, aim at the same Thing; the Difference lies only in the different Ways and Means used to procure them. The Virtuous and the Brave expect and desire them only as the Rewards of superior Merit; whilst the Wicked and the Worthless attempt to obtain them by iniquitous Schemes, and villanous Practices. Now if the Enemies of the *Clergy* can charge them with any such corrupt Methods of obtaining Preferments, if it could be proved that any Man among them had forsaken the plain direct Path of Religion, Virtue, Decency and Honour in pursuit of Preferment, if any could be thought wicked enough to obtain or attempt to obtain the Favour of the Great, by unworthy Prostitutions, base Compliances, infamous Jobbs and dirty Services, let the Infamy and the Shame be all their own. But let not the Innocent be condemned for the Faults of the Guilty; such a Person (if such could be found) would, I dare say, appear as despicable and contemptible to the rest of his Order, as he justly doth to the Enemies of Religion.

Let us now consider the Charge of *Covetousness*, which the Enemies of the *Clergy* generally fix upon them, which (according to the best Observations I could ever make) hath but two slender Topicks to support it.

1. Their strict Demand and Exaction of their legal Dues.
2. Their Endeavours to improve the Revenue of the Church, by raising their Fines upon Renewal of Ecclesiastical Leases.

These are such poor Pretences to support such a general Infamy, that they scarce deserve an Answer. As to the first Article, The rigid Exaction of their Dues is so far from being a just Ground of Reproach, that it is the direct contrary. They are bound by the strictest Obligation of Conscience and Duty, more
than

than by Interest, to support their Title to the smallest Dues; they would be Traitors to the Community, unjust to their Families, but most of all to their Successors, if they did not. The *Clergy* are not *Proprietors*, they are no more than *Stewards*, *Guardians*, or *Usufructuaries* of their Revenues; and as they have no Right or Power to alienate or sell their Endowments, so they are under the strongest Obligations to maintain and defend, and (by all just and honourable Means) to improve and increase them. The Lay-Proprietors of Estates are at liberty to make what Abatements they please to their Tenants, and are accountable to nobody: Yet shew me the Man that doth not rigidly exact his Dues. How rigorously do they demand of their poorest Tenants, the smallest Quit-rents, which a generous compassionate Man could hardly have the Heart to receive? How punctual and exact is your opulent Neighbour in demanding his Groats and old Hens of his poor Tenants, who want almost the Crumbs, that fall from his Table! How unmerciful a Custom doth it seem for a Lord of a Mannor, upon the Death of a poor Tenant, to take from the disconsolate Widow and Orphans the best live Goods by Way of Herriot, when instead of adding to their Affliction, they should rather be contriving Ways and Means to comfort and support them? Yet shew me one Man in a thousand, that neglects to take the Advantage, and make a Seizure accordingly. To this it is answered, and very justly, it is an Act of Royalty, annexed to his Mannor, and he should be unjust to himself and Family, and his most remote Posterity, if he should lose so valuable a Right for want of demanding it. Very right! ---- And now pray shew me a Reason, if you can, why the same Plea should not have the same Force in Defence of the *Clergy*, as it hath for the Laity. In my Opinion it ought to have much more: The Lay-Proprietors leave their Inheritance to their Children; and altho' they should drop some small Demands, it would scarce be felt by the Heirs, that inherit their Lands: But the *Clergy* have nothing but the Use, and in many Places the Revenue ariseth chiefly from small

small Dues. And as the Son of *Sinach* * says, *He that despises (these) small Things, shall fall by little and little, into great Poverty and Contempt.* And when they die the Possession is intirely transferred from the surviving Family, who perhaps, have nothing to subsist them but the careful Gleanings of these *small Things* made by the departed Husband or Father.

The second Pretence is, that the *Clergy* are severe upon their Tenants, in raising their Fines upon renewing of Church Leases. *Sir Harry* flourished much upon this Topick: He cannot digest his last Fine; the Spirit of Grumbling is strong upon him, and will not suffer him to think, or talk, or hearken to Reason. This (he says) was such a Piece of Oppression in the Bishop, as he can never forgive; altho' we all know it is no more than he doth to all his own Tenants, whenever they want to renew. --- So absurd and inconsistent are Men, even Men of Sense, when blinded by Prejudice and Vanity; they condemn those Things in others, which they think excusable and commendable in themselves. *I remember the Time* (says *Sir Harry*) *when Bishops and Chapter Leases were almost as good as Free-Land; then the Tenants of the Church prospered, and had an Affection and Esteem for their Landlords: but now they rack us up to the last Shilling.* Hold *Sir Harry* --- not so fast. They must, I believe, for very obvious Reasons, be still the best Landlords; and if they could live upon good Words and fair Speeches, and the Affections of their Tenants, without taking any Fines, they would be much better; and if they would take nothing at all, they would be better still. --- Pray give me leave to ask a serious Question. If a Clergyman were to come to you to take a Lease for three Lives of his Children, and the Widowhood of his Wife; how would you behave your self? In what Manner would you treat with him? Would you have any Regard for the personal Merit of the Purchaser? Would you make him any Abatement in his Fine, upon the Account of his superior Learning, or

exemplary Piety, or would you indulge him in two or three advantageous Articles in his Lease, purely for being a Believer and Defender of the Christian Faith? Would you regard any Thing but the real Value of the Estate? And would you part with it without a valuable Consideration? Ask your self, and answer your self.---And give me a Reason, if you can, why the Clergy ought to deal better by you, than you would do by them; especially, when you consider, that all the Interest to the Family of the Possessor must arise from such Contingencies as these during his Life-time. And that Clergyman, who in the Decline of his Life, and perhaps strait Circumstances, shall refuse to accept of an unworthy Consideration to fill up a Lease to the Prejudice of his Successors, deserves to have his Statue erected, and his Family maintained, at the Expence of the *Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy*.

The next Accusation against them, is their servile Application and Attachment to Men in Power.

A servile Application, and corrupt Attachment to Men in Power, is a Reproach to any Man of an ingenious Spirit and liberal Education; but especially to a Clergy-Man, whose Profession ought to make him as incapable of exerting a corrupt Influence on any Person, or any Occasion, as of submitting to it from others: But a decent Reverence and proper Regard for their Superiors, who are presumed to be the best Judges of Merit, and best able to encourage and reward it, is not only an Act of Justice, but of good Policy, and sound Prudence. Do not Men in all Professions of Life do the same? Every Man that is blest with superior Talents, and is not depressed by want of Modesty, cannot help exerting that Superiority upon proper Occasions; and where can he so properly or so prudently do it, as under the Inspection of those, who are most likely to observe, distinguish and reward it? If there be really any Patron so wicked, as to insist upon dishonourable Terms to engage his Favour, and obtain Preferment: If there be any Clergyman so abject and corrupt, as to comply with such Terms, let their Names be produced, let their Guilt be plainly proved, and

and let them be branded with all the Marks of Infamy, and Disgrace, which such Crimes deserve. But let not the whole Order suffer for mere Suspicions of Guilt charged only upon a few, and detested by a great Majority of the best and most valuable Men of their Order.---It must be confessed, that Men of weak Heads, and corrupt Hearts have too often mistaken the true Nature of Gratitude, and have extended it far beyond the Bounds of Reason, Justice and Truth, who think themselves bound to sacrifice every Principle of Virtue and Honour, and every Conviction of Conscience to those, who have been, or promised to be the Authors or Instruments of their Promotion; who think themselves obliged to sacrifice their Souls to them, that gave them Bread, to follow their Leaders; to obey every Word of Command; and who, upon Non-compliance are under the same Terrors with the Gentlemen of the Army for Mutiny and Desertion. If any such are now in being, we give them up, we have nothing to plead in their Excuse.---They are detested (as I said before) by a great Majority of their own Order; despised as infamous Tools, by those who employ them; and condemned by the impartial Judgment of their own Consciences, to whose terrible Discipline and Correction we leave them.

Let us turn our Eyes to a more agreeable Prospect.--The Numbers of honest, generous Hearts, who scorn such abject Compliances; who would prefer honest Poverty to dishonourable Promotion, and would sooner submit to a Livery and Shoulder-knot, than to an infamous Prostitution of Character.

It is reported of Dr. *Kidder*, who was made Bishop of *Bath* and *Wells*, upon the Deprivation of Bishop *Kenn*, that he had once the Honour to be entertained in a Great Man's Closet, who proposed a Piece of Service to him, which threw him into great Perplexity and Confusion; ---- but after some Recollection he begged to be excused; being pressed over and over, he at last absolutely refused. How, my Lord! (said the Great Man, in a great Passion) do you refuse me? Don't you consider that you eat the K----g's Bread?

No,

No, my Lord (reply'd the Bishop) I eat no Man's Bread but good Bishop *Kenn's*; and if he will but consent to eat his Bread himself, I will freely give it up to him this Moment.

The third Article of the Charge against them, is, their misapplying the Revenues of the Church, and filling up their best Preferments with their own Children, Relations, and Sycophants, without any Regard to real Merit.

This is a loose general Accusation, and requires more particular evident Proofs to support it, than (we humbly conceive) can ever be produced. But supposing it in a great measure true; can a Christian Bishop give a better Proof of his reverend Esteem and Affection for the Church, than by devoting his own Children to that Service? Is it not more for their Honour and Christian Reputation, than to raise Estates for them by Parsimony and Oppression, in order to support them in Ignorance and Luxury? And ought it to be objected to them as a Crime, that they bestow their best Preferments (supposing the Fact could be proved) upon their own Children and nearest Friends? Do not Nature and common Prudence demand it? And ought any Man to be called partial and unjust, for preferring his own deserving Children and Friends before Strangers, altho' apparently of equal Merit? --- But it is insinuated, That real Merit is no part of the Consideration, That altho' they might, and perhaps ought to be preferred before Strangers, (*Cæteris Paribus*,) yet they prefer People of no Merit at all, purely for the sake of Relation; whilst others of real Merit and Character are neglected and discouraged. This Objection seems to be the Language of Disappointment and Resentment. It is more than probable, that when a good Preferment was vacant; there were more than one or two, who thought it very convenient for them; that they had Merit enough to deserve it, and therefore Confidence enough to expect it; who upon being disappointed would naturally think themselves injured, and express their Resentments by depreciating other Mens Characters, and exalting their own. The Bishop hath, however, in this

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respect one certain Advantage, that he cannot easily be deceived in the Character of his *Clerk* ; whose Talents, Education, Principles, and manner of Life he must be better able to judge of than of Strangers, whose Merit must depend chiefly on the Testimonies of others ; and how unfairly such Testimonials are too often procured, need not to be mentioned in this Place.

I come now to the fourth Article, of *Pluralities, Non-Residence, and Commendams* : And, indeed----upon this Head----I must needs say, with the sage Sir *Roger de Coverly* *, *Much may be said on both Sides*. They cannot be entirely defended, nor must they be absolutely condemned. They are in some Cases not only lawful and expedient, but necessary ; and in others scandalous and abominable. Where the Revenues of one Benefice are not sufficient to support the Dignity of the Office to which it is annexed, there it is highly just and reasonable, that a proper Addition should be made to supply the Deficiency. This is particularly the Case of our smallest Bishopricks, they are not sufficient to support that Hospitality, expensive Attendance on Parliament, and decent Figure in Life, which are necessary for Men in such exalted Stations ; and have therefore generally the comfortable Addition of some Dignity or Benefice, which are held in *Commendam*. So far is just and right. But to see Men without any laudable Distinction of Character or Station, groaning under a Load of Preferments, which they neither deserve nor become, is scandalous and shameful.----We shall leave this Article to the serious Consideration of those, who are chiefly concerned ; who enjoy this invidious Accumulation of Honours and Preferments : We beg them seriously to examine their own Hearts, with what Views, and on what Pretensions they first sought them, by what Methods they obtained them, and what Use they make of them. If, in this Enquiry, their Hearts condemn them not, neither do we condemn them : If they employ their large Revenues to the Glory of God, the Encouragement of Piety and Learning, the Relief of the Needy, and the Assistance of the Helpless, the Te-

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stimony of their Consciences, and the Approbation and Applauses of good Men, will be an Over-balance against all the malicious Censures of those, that envy their Prosperity and hate their Order. But if their own Hearts condemn them, if they and the World about them know that they spend their large Revenues (which are committed to them as a sacred Trust) in Luxury and Vanity; if they are entirely directed by secular Views, and worldly Interests, if their Hearts are set upon Equipage and Shew, making a Figure, and enriching a Family; let such know they are unworthy of such Distinctions, and deserve all that Contempt, which is justly poured upon them, by the best Friends as well as Enemies of their Order. But the general Charge against the whole Body of the *Clergy*, is so far from being true, that it is the direct Contrary. And we dare affirm, that of the great Number of religious and learned Foundations, Schools, Colleges, Churches, and Hospitals, which are the Glory of our Nation, much the greater Part are owing to the Generosity and Munificence of the *Clergy*, which appears from the Records of their respective Foundations.

I proceed now to consider the general Charge against the inferior *Clergy*, viz. *Pride, Pedantry, Ill-manners, Idleness, and Neglect of their Cures, &c.-----&c.* I, who have passed thro' many Scenes of Life as a silent and impartial Spectator, have made it a general Remark, that *Pride, Pedantry, &c.* are most commonly charged by their Enemies upon the most deserving; and that Idleness and Neglect of their Cures are always charged by their Friends on the most worthless Part of their Order. There are without doubt too many among them that too well deserve these Imputations; but must all suffer for their sakes? Because
 * *Justice*, § *Wreathock*, and † *Car* were Villiains,
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* A Councillor at Law, was transported for stealing Books out of the Library at *Cambridge*, and afterwards selling them.

§ An Attorney, convicted at the *Old Baily*, for Forgery, Perjury, Subornation, and robbing the Reverend Dr. *Lancaster* on the High-way. He was transported with *Justice*.

† An Attorney, was hanged at *Tyburn*, for robbing a Gentleman at a Baudy-House near *Temple-Bar*.

must all the Lawyers be sent to *Tyburn* or the *Plantations* ! Because there have been Murderers and Ravishers among the Gentlemen of the Army, must we therefore disband them, and send them all to the D--- ! No ; let the Guilty only be condemned, let the rotten offensive Member be cut off, that the whole Body perish not. But let us come to a more particular Examination of this accumulated Charge, which the Enemies of the *Clergy* frequently alledge to justify their contemptuous Behaviour towards them. It must be owned, that the *Clergy* in and about Town, have no Reason to complain of Contempt, they have their full Portion of Respect and Esteem ; and in other Cities and great Towns in Proportion. Whether it be that the better Sort of *Clergy* are usually fixed in those large conspicuous Cures ; or whether they are more careful to support their Characters, where they know themselves to be under the Observation and Censures of Men of Taste and Figure, but so it is---and the further you remove from those Places, you gradually decline to Barbarism and Obscurity. There are, to my particular Knowledge, in many Country Villages, Clergymen of distinguished Learning and Piety, who are as it were buried alive among the Vicious and the Ignorant, and in a Manner excluded from all the Comforts of social Life. And how should it be otherwise, except where the Esquire or Great Men of the Parish or Neighbourhood be Judges and Lovers of real Merit. And how often that is the Case, I leave you to judge. If the Esquire happen to be wrong-headed, illiterate, sottish or profane, what can the poor Parson do ? Can there be any Agreement between Sense and Nonsense, any Concord betwixt Virtue and Vice, any Communion betwixt Light and Darkness ? If they should ever descend so low as to invite the poor Vicar from his Solitude, *Soup Maigre*, and Watch-light, to make one in a Party of Frolick and Madness ; and he should refuse the Invitation, or come awkwardly into it ; if he should refuse to go to the utmost Stretch of Intemperance, or disrelish the many ungracious Jokes, which are always crack'd o-

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ver the Doctor ; it gives a Sort of check to the Mer-
 riment, and throws a damp upon the Spirits of the good
 Company ; they immediately treat him with that In-
 difference and Contempt (if not with Rudeness and Ill-
 manners) as may sufficiently discourage him from ever
 venturing among them again. From that Moment he
 hath a Mark of Contempt fixed upon him, as a *sour,*
morose, ill-natured Fellow. If he should ever take a de-
 cent Opportunity of shewing the Gentlemen their true
 Characters, and attempt to convince them of their ab-
 surd, irregular, licentious, hopeless Way of Life, al-
 tho' they should seem to hear it with Patience, yet
 they never heartily forgive the Impertinence of the offi-
 cious Reprover ; that Resentment seldom fails to produce
 Rancor and Aversion, and from that Moment every
 Thing takes a wrong turn ; the most innocent Words
 and Actions are mis-represented, and the most general
 Reflections upon any one Vice, even in the Pulpit, are
 interpreted as a Satyr or Libel upon the Esquire and his
 Friends, who return him the Compliment of an *un-*
mannerly ill-bred Coxcomb. If at any Time he should
 have the Courage to interrupt a profane leud Conver-
 sation, and with a decent Assurance rally and expose
 their Ignorance, which is the real Root of Infidelity, if
 he attempt to reduce them from Rattle and Tumult,
 from leud Jokes and loud Laughter to cool and impar-
 tial Reasoning, to which they are absolute Strangers ;
 they cover their Confusion as well as they can, with
 an affected Superiority of Taste, or Quality, of
 Front, or Fortune, and ever after condemn and avoid
 the impertinent Reformer, for an *insolent insupportable*
Pedant.

When I was at *Bath* last Year, I was invited by a
 Gentleman who lodged in the same House, to go and
 spend a Month with him at his Seat in *Somersetshire.* I
 readily accepted his Invitation, and went with him,
 We came thither on a Friday Night, and on the Sun-
 day Morning I was preparing to go to Church, which
 I always look upon as a decent Compliment to my Su-
 periors,

periors, who have been pleased to make the Christian Religion a national Establishment ; but my Friend took me out to walk in his Park, and shew me the Beauties of his Situation. The next Sunday he contrived some other Amusement to hinder our going to Church. There was indeed a Clergyman in the House, who had quite laid aside his sacerdotal Character, but acted in several Lay-capacities, as Valet-de-Chambre, Butler, Game-keeper, Pot-companion, Butt, and Buffoon, who never read Prayers, or so much as said Grace in the Family whilst I was in it. Nay, don't laugh, whatever my own Sentiments or Practice may be, yet you must own my Character is consistent ; I am all of a Piece ; my Sentiments and Practice agree, and I have a much better Opinion of a Man, that pretends to no Sort of religious Principles, than I can have of one, whose Practice is a direct Contradiction to his Profession. This by the Way.----Upon my asking the Character of the Vicar, whose Face I had never seen, or scarce heard his Name mention'd, he was represented as a *proud, unmannerly, sour Pedant* ; who could never be an agreeable Companion to People of Taste and Politeness. The next Sunday my Curiosity led me to Church, whilst my Friend staid at home to settle an Account with his Bailiff ; where I had the Pleasure of hearing a very plain, rational Discourse, delivered with a decent Warmth, and a manly Authority. After Service, seeing me to be a Stranger, he pressed me in a very obliging Manner to dine with him, which I excused, but took half an Hour's Walk with him in his Garden before Dinner, and quickly found him to be a very learned, well-bred, religious Man ; but one that was resolved to support his sacred Character, and not prostitute the Dignity of his Function, nor his superior Understanding, to the Vanity and Contempt of Ignorance and Folly. This was sufficient to exclude him from all the social Comforts of good Neighbourhood ; whilst a dirty Wretch, who seemed to live in defiance of Virtue, Decency, good Manners, and clean Linnen, was in a good Measure the first Minister and Director of the Family ; always mentioned with the
familiar

familiar Appellation of *Honest Harry* ; a merry, good-natur'd Fellow as ever broke Bread.

And that this is the Case of Numbers besides, I am convinced by my own Experience and Observation of Mankind. A due Regard to a Man's Character, and the natural Obligations that arise from it, is called *Pride*. A decent Reproof of the Wealthy and Proud, is called *Ill-manners*. A just Censure of the Dissolute and Licentious, is called *Ill-nature* : And talking the Language of Scripture, natural Religion, Reason and Philosophy, is called *Impertinence* and *Pedantry*.

I often think, if the Apostle of the *Gentiles* were to come amongst us once more, without the Power of working Miracles, what a poor Figure he would make ; he could never expect any Thing better than a petty School, or a poor Curacy in the Country ; and it would be well for him, if he could long have a peaceable Possession of that. His *bodily Presence* (he himself owns) *was weak, and his Speech contemptible*. And I can assure him, that would go a great Way towards spoiling his Fortune. Those that can judge of nothing else, can distinguish an agreeable, comely Person ; and a good jolly Outside hath recommended many a worthless Fellow to the Notice and Favour of his Superiors. Nor was this the Worst : But his Temper and Behaviour were (by his own Confession) as forbidding and disagreeable as his Person. He every where describes himself with all the Types of a *proud unmannerly Pedant*. In all his Epistles he gives himself violent Airs of Authority, which he pretended he had received from Heaven, by which he presumed to send People to the Devil for not doing as they ought to do, and to give them Assurance of Pardon upon their Repentance. At one Time he assumes an Equality with the Chiefest of the Apostles ; at other Times, he exalts himself above them all, and took upon him to correct one of them that happened to differ with him, with very sharp Language, even to his Face. This *Ill-manners* appear'd in his Behaviour to his Betters upon all Occasions, when he stood before *Felix* and *Drusilla* ; although he knew his Life was in Danger, he could not forbear throwing out several

unmannerly Reflections upon them both, for their Manner of living ; which was no other than hath been frequently practised among People of Fashion in those Days, as well as since. The Truth of the Case was this, as it is related by *Josephus* * : *Felix* was much a fine Gentleman, addicted to Gallantry and expensive Pleasures, and by consequence a little covetous of Money in order to support them ; and being a Man of Spirit and Genius, he was above those superstitious Regards to Conscience, and I know not what, which are usually met with among Men of low Birth and mean Education, *Drusilla* was a Lady of great Beauty and Quality, Sister to King *Agrippa*, and married to *Azizas*, King of the *Emeseniens*, who had consented to be circumcised in order to obtain her. But *Felix* happening to see her, fell passionately in love with her, and being a Man of irresistible Address, he never left off till he had put her quite out of conceit with an insipid, formal Tool of a Husband, and persuaded her to surrender up all her Charms to himself ; to which the compassionate Lady, in mere pity to a languishing Lover, ----- unwillingly consented. Well ! and what of all this ! How was the Apostle concerned in this Affair ! Could not he have pleaded his own Cause, and told his own Story without reflecting upon his *Betters* ! ----Must People of their Distinction be accountable to any body for a few Gallantries among themselves ? ----He did not indeed directly charge them with the Crimes mentioned. No, he was too cunning for that. It was all by *Innuendo's*, which hath always been thought a safe Way of abusing one's *Betters*. What else had he to do, to talk about *Righteousness, Temperance, and a Judgment to come* ! But silyly to reproach them with the want of those Virtues he was recommending, with an *Innuendo* that they would, without Repentance and Amendment, be infallibly damned in the next World, for their Gallantries in this. And that in such rough uncourtly Language, that frightened the Governor into a Fit of Trembling ;

and, no doubt, threw the poor Lady into Vapours and Palpitations. Had he or any body else took such Liberties in any Congregation in this City, especially at the polite End of the Town, I question whether he would not provoke some of the best Men in the Parish, and destroy all his Hopes of Preferment. He was upon another Occasion, as saucy to the High Priest, as he was to the Governor, calling him *whited Wall*, a proverbial Expression for an Hypocrite, and threatening him with God's Judgments for his notorious Partiality and Injustice. *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall, for sittest thou to judge me according to the Law, and commandest me to be smitten, contrary to the Law?* --- Now can any Man say that this was a decent Way of treating his *Betters*? The well-bred Preachers among us are ashamed of these indecent Liberties; they consider the Quality and Taste of the Audience, and make Use of such Topicks, and such Language as are least apt to give Offence, and most likely to gain their Attention. With this a judicious, polite Preacher might inspire the best Part of his Audience with an Aversion and Abhorrence of almost every Vice, by shewing them how destructive they are to their Health, their Reputation, or their Fortunes; and recommend every Virtue as a genteel Accomplishment, and an essential Part of Good-breeding. Would it not, think you, be a sufficient Recommendation of the Virtues of Meekness, Temperance, and Chastity to every rational Lady in *Great Britain*, to shew them how much they contribute to preserve their Health, their Shapes, and Complexions! ---- But to talk of *Hell, Damnation, the Devil, Fire and Brimstone* (Words only fit for the Mouth of an Incendiary or a Highwayman) is indecent and shocking to a polite Audience, and enough to throw the most brilliant Part of the Congregation into Fits. ----- So much for his *Ill-manners*, and his Pedantry was equal to it. A *Pedant*, we all know, is a mere any Thing: A mere Scholar, a mere Soldier, a mere Tar, a mere Fox-hunter; one that knows nothing, and can talk of nothing, but his own Profession, and Way of Life.----- This particular Absurdity runs through all his Writings. His Education,

Education, his Conversion, his Commission, his Authority, his Faith, his Hope, his Charity, and I know not what, are the great Topicks in all his Epistles. Nor was this owing to mere Infirmary or Forgetfulness; but it appears to have been his first Resolution to persist in it: *I determined (says he) to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* ---- Poor Man! If he were to set out among us with this Resolution, and nothing else to recommend him, I could venture to assure him, it would do him but very little Service. *If he understood Quadrille, were a keen Sportsman, a good Bottle-Companion, a notable Manager of an Election, or thoroughly acquainted with the Mysteries of Stocks and Funds, it would contribute much more to his Credit among the Polite, and his Fortune among the discerning Part of Mankind.*

The last general Charge against the inferior Clergy is *Idleness*, and the Neglect of their Cures,-----
&c.----

To this Part of the Accusation, I fear, there are too many, who must plead guilty. It is often acknowledged and lamented by the best Men, and best Friends of their Order; but comes awkwardly and insincerely from the Mouth of an Enemy. The Lazy, and the Vitious are their Delight. It is their Pleasure to see a Clergyman live in Defiance of his Duty, and expose himself to the Scorn and Contempt of leud and notorious Company. They love a Man, that will sacrifice his Duty and Conscience to a Merry-meeting; that will be as leud and profane, as the Rest of the Company over his Bottle, and even blaspheme for a good Dinner. Such as these are the Disgrace of their Order, and are for that very Reason the Friends and Favourites of the Ignorant and Prophane. *The honest Doctor*, that will talk leudly and prophanely, and never balk his Glass, is sure to give no Interruption to the Mirth of the Company; he can never have the Confidence to rebuke the Vices in others, which he encourages by his own Example. Nor is this all.----It is a great Consolation to their Spirits to find the *Parson* as wicked as themselves. The most sanguine Atheist hath some
Doubts,

Doubts, that disquiet him : The merriest Sinner hath some uneasy Moments, some Misgivings of Conscience, some Suspicions of Danger, which he knows not how to conquer ; but when he sees *the Reverend Doctor* (whose Profession it is to know, to teach and to practise better) join in all the shocking Liberties of a wicked Conversation, it gives him a Sort of Hope, that he himself doth not really believe the Doctrine, he preacheth to others ; and altho' he may on a *Sunday* talk the Language of a Christian Believer, yet it is only for Form's sake, being a necessary Service to secure his Tenure and his Maintenance. And this is the true Reason why too many, who in other Respects judge and act like Men of Sense and Honour, in their Treatment of the *Clergy*, seem to bid Defiance to both. Reason and good Sense direct us to judge of Men and Things by their internal Excellency and Usefulness to Mankind ; whatever tends to promote the most excellent Ends by the most easy and agreeable Means, are the most eminently esteemed and valued by Men of Sense and Understanding. Now can any End be more excellent than that, which Religion proposeth ? Can there be a more valuable Interest than the eternal Happiness of all Mankind ? Nay, do not think I am going beyond the Articles of my own Creed. Upon the strongest Convictions of sober Reason, I believe there is a God ; and that he is a Rewarder of them, that endeavour to serve and please him to the best of their Knowledge and Power ; the same unprejudiced Reason assures me, that the human Soul is immortal ; which all the Free-Thinkers of the *Heathen* World believed as well as I : And therefore I conclude, that the Rewards of Virtue and Piety will be eternal in the World to come. Well then is not everlasting Happiness to be preferred to everlasting Misery ? Is not a quiet Conscience better than a guilty one ? Is it not the highest Prudence to secure even a probable Reversion of everlasting Happiness, and prevent even a Possibility of being miserable for ever ? These are the Ends, which even natural Religion proposeth ; of which, no Man of common Sense can entertain a serious Doubt. Nor are the Means less excellent

lent and reasonable than the End. The Means are the Exercise of every moral Virtue. Now will any Man in his Senses say, that the Practice of every Virtue is not more excellent, than the Practice of every Vice? Is not the Character of a just and upright Man better than that of a Rogue or a Villain? Is not a sober, temperate Man more valuable than a Sot or a Rake? Is it not much more excellent to be merciful, bountiful, and charitable, than to be a covetous, hard-hearted Oppressor? Is it not more reasonable and excellent to serve and worship God to the best of our Knowledge and Power, and do good to Mankind, than it is, neither to fear God nor regard Man? It is an Affront to common Sense to make so absurd a Supposition as this Question implies: I say then, that those, whose Business it is to promote these glorious Ends, who labour in it with Integrity, Prudence and Courage, and live agreeably to their preaching, deserve to be consider'd as Friends and Benefactors to Mankind; and the most useful Supports of civil Government and Order in the World.

It is allowed on all Hands, to be a Point of Equity and natural Justice to judge impartially of the moral Characters of Men, and to fix Marks of Infamy or Honour in proportion to their different Degrees of Merit or Demerit, in their different Stations of Life. Now consider, how valuable to every Man of Sense and Honour is the Character of a generous, obliging Neighbour, a sincere Friend, a just Servant, and a faithful Steward? Every Man at first hearing hath a secret Esteem and Affection for these Characters. And why so, but because they act justly and honourably in their different Stations of Life. So again, for the same Reason, every Man of Sense and Honour esteems an upright, skillful Lawyer, a learned, careful Physician, a vigilant and active Magistrate, an uncorrupt Judge, an honest, bold Commander by Sea or Land. Is not then a sincerely good and virtuous Man, is not a serious, learned, conscientious Clergyman entitled to the same Proportion of Esteem and Honour? Surely he ought to be; and that for the very same Reason, because
he

he faithfully executes the Trust committed to him, and acts agreeably to his Character. Consider, again on the other Hand, how detestable to every Man of Honour is the treacherous Neighbour, the false Friend, the unfaithful Servant, the unjust Steward, the corrupt Lawyer, the ignorant or negligent Physician, the wicked Judge, the cowardly, treacherous Commander ; and all for the same Reason, because they act unworthily and disagreeably to their Characters, and betray the several Trusts reposed in them. And now tell me, is not every wicked, immoral Man, particularly every scandalous, immoral Clergyman equally detestable ! Are they not under higher, or at least equal Obligations to act agreeably to their Characters, and faithfully to execute the several Duties of their Office, to live exemplary and sober Lives, to encourage the Virtues, and rebuke the Vices of others, and promote to the utmost of their Power the Interests of Truth and Virtue, the temporal Happiness and Peace of Mankind, and the Salvation of their Souls hereafter ? Surely this is their indispensable Duty. And whosoever acts otherwise, is a Traitor to his Trust, an Enemy to God and his own Soul. Every Man of Sense and Honour must acknowledge this to be the true State of the Case. Yet in spite of this strong Conviction, this undeniable Conclusion, we daily see Men, who value themselves upon their superior good Sense, and nice Honour, who would think it a Reproach to their Understandings to be mistaken in their Judgments about a Horse or a Dog ; and would blush to be told they had not Sense enough to distinguish a good one from a bad one ; yet have a secret Pride and Pleasure in distinguishing and caressing a vitious unworthy Clergyman, purely for being such ; and despising and affronting the Virtuous and the Good, purely for doing their Duty, and acting agreeably to their Character and Profession. --- Shame and Repentance be the Portion of those, who either give or receive this unworthy Preference. But let not the Learned, the Diligent, the Faithful, and the Virtuous suffer Reproach for the Vices of their unworthy Brethren ; which their Enemies openly ap-
prove

prove and encourage, and their best Friends condemn and lament, but can neither prevent nor cure.

Dear Sir,

A Neighbour just setting out for London, offers to take my Papers, and gives me no Time to add more than my Prayers and good Wishes; please to preserve them safe.

Adieu, D. S.

THUS far we have considered the general Charge against the whole Body of the Clergy, and what may and ought to be produced in their Defence, altho' we pretend not to justify the entire Conduct of every individual Character. Our Acquaintance among the *Clergy* (especially of the higher Order) is not sufficient to enable us to judge, whether there be, as Sir *Harry* boldly affirms upon his own Knowledge, any *immoral, ignorant, sneaking Time-servers*, &c.----among them. If there be, we give them up, and have nothing to plead in their Behalf. But still, my Friend, let us judge fairly and impartially, and lay the Blame where it ought to be laid. If there be such, they could neither ordain nor prefer themselves; they therefore that ordained or preferred such unworthy Persons, have the greater Sin. It is a popular Saying, That the Corruption of the Laity is owing to the Corruption of the *Clergy*; but impartial Reason, and daily Experience evinces the Contrary, and assures us that the Ignorance, Immorality, and Corruption charged upon the *Clergy*, are owing to the Ignorance or Iniquity of those Patrons that preferred them. The Patronage of Ecclesiastical Benefices is a very sacred and important Trust, which should be executed with the greatest Impartiality, Tendernefs, and Caution. The Original of which was this: The first Founders of the Churches always articulated with the Bishop of the Diocese, that they should have the Privileges of presenting fit Clerks to supply their Churches, and

and receive the Profits of their Endowments ; than which nothing could be more reasonable, for as it was certain that nothing but a devout Sense of Religion and a due Regard to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mens Souls, could ever induce Men to dispose of their Estates for such pious Uses ; so it was as certain, that they would employ none to officiate in those Churches, and have the Care of Souls, but such as they knew to be rightly qualified, and duly disposed to execute so sacred a Commission ; and answer the pious Intentions of the Founders : Which Right is justly continued to their Posterity, and those that have purchased from them. And great pity it is, that the Piety of the first Founders had not always descended to their Posterity with their Inheritance ; which would have been (under Providence) the best Security the Church could possibly have for a constant Succession of worthy Clergymen.

The Patron of a Church, who hath the Right of Presentation to a Cure of Souls, is in the Nature of a Guardian or Trustee for those Souls, and hath much to answer for, if he commit the Care of them to an unworthy Person.

The Scriptures,----(nay don't laugh, for I assure you I read them, as the best System of Morality that ever appeared in the World :) The Scriptures, I say, describe the Office and Duty of a good *Clergy*, by a great Variety of strong and significant Metaphors. Such as follow.

1. *Lights of the World.* Mat. v. 14. Phil. ii. 15.
2. *Examples to the Flock.* 1 Pet. v. 3.
3. *Good Shepherds.* John x.
4. *Physicians of Souls.* Mat. ix. 12.
5. *Watchmen.* Ezek. xxxiii. 7.
6. *Spiritual Guides.* Acts viii. 31. Rom. ii. 19. Heb. xiii. 17.
7. *Ambassadors.* 2 Cor. v. 20. Eph. vi. 20.
8. *Stewards of the Mysteries of God.* 1 Cor. iv. 1.

All

All expressing the great End and Design of their Office, and the necessary Qualifications for it. The Duty and Business of a Patron, is to chuse such a Person to take Care of those Souls, as may faithfully and conscientiously discharge the several Duties of his Office, implied under these different Characters. And he, who upon base Considerations, knowingly commits the Care of Souls to an ignorant, an unbelieving, a negligent, an immoral wicked Man, betrays the great and sacred Trust committed to him, involves himself in all the Guilt of his *Clerk*, and will have a sad Account to give for the Loss of those Souls that shall perish through his Fault.

Let us take a nearer and closer View of the Folly and Iniquity of such a corrupt Patron, by considering the several Characters of good Clergy-men abovementioned; which ought to direct and determine his Choice of proper Persons for that sacred and important Office. They are, 1. *To be the Lights of their Cure*; to enlighten the Darkness; and instruct the Ignorance of those committed to their Charge. They are to shew them the Error of their Ways, and lead them out of Darkness into Light, that they may see the Things that make for their Peace, and be conducted by that Light into the Path of everlasting Life. Now if a corrupt or negligent Patron, instead of setting up a *burning, and shining Light*, should take it in his Head to prefer an ignorant, injudicious Tool to the Cure of a Multitude of Souls; it would be just as wise and equitable a Piece of Conduct, as if the chief Magistrate should command a Rush-Light or a Farthing-Candle to be set up in every Light-House upon the Coasts of *Great-Britain*, with the gracious Addition of a brace or two of Glow-worms, for the Improvement of Light and Security of Navigation.

They are, secondly, to be *Examples to the Flock*; to be Patterns of their Conduct, that they should learn to act and walk as they see their Teachers do. But to set up a leud Rake, or a profligate Libertine to be an Example to his Flock, would be just as ridiculous as if a Painter should advise his Scholars to copy *Thersites*, or
Dicky

Dicky Scarborough, as Models of an exact Shape ; or a *Chimney-Sweeper* for a fine Complexion.

They are, thirdly, to be good *Shepherds* ; to feed and defend the Flocks committed to their Charge *, to seek that, which was lost, and bring again that, which was driven away, to bind up that, which was broken, and to strengthen that, which was sick. He therefore, that commits the Care of Souls to a worldly, covetous, negligent, or cruel Man, who shall regard nothing but † to feed himself with the Fat, and to cloath himself with the Wool, kill them that are fed, and neglect to feed the rest ; acts as wisely and rationally as he, that should commit the Care of his Flock to the Butcher, or leave them to the Mercy of the Wolf.

They are, fourthly, *Physicians of Souls*, from whom so much greater Skill, Experience, Assiduity and Compassion is expected than from the *Physicians of our Bodies* : as the former are infinitely more valuable than the latter, their Distempers more difficult to be cured, and a Miscarriage irrecoverably fatal ; with this Regard a *Patron* may be considered, as a *Governor in any of our Hospitals*. Suppose now, that the Governors in any of our great Hospitals should come to a Resolution, to chuse neither Physician nor Surgeon, but of such a particular Size, Complexion, or Family, who besides all that, could produce undoubted Testimonies, that he could upon proper Occasions jump nine Times forward and backward over a Stick without boggling ; and make no more Difficulty of swallowing a piece of a Mill-Stone at the Word of Command, than a piece of a Custard, or a Glass of Wine, without any Regard at all to their Knowledge and Abilities in their respective Professions : To whose Account would you charge the many Lives, that would infallibly be lost, for want of able Physicians and skillful Surgeons to attend the poor Patients ! --- A Question not fit to be asked ; to which every Fool can give an Answer.

* Ezek. xxiv. 16.

They are, fifthly, *Watchmen* ; who in ancient Times were placed upon Watch-towers, Posts of Eminence, and Elevation, from whence they might have more extensive Views, than the World below them ; that they might more easily foresee distant Dangers, such as the breaking out of a Fire, or Inundation, or the Invasion of an Enemy, and give timely Warning to those below, to prevent or flee from the approaching Danger. The Virtues proper for such an Officer were, 1. Vigilance. 2. Attention. 3. Integrity. 4. Courage. If a *Watchman* were to take the Advantage of his exalted Station, where nobody could overlook him, to sleep more securely and comfortably than his Neighbours below him ; what would he not deserve ? — Nay, suppose him to be wide awake, he may happen to be no better employed, than if he were fast asleep ; he may be paring his Nails, or mending his Stockings, reading the History of *Robin Hood*, or *Tom Thumb* ; without any Regard to the Nature of his Office, the Welfare of his Neighbours, or the Design of his Elevation. Let us, however, suppose him really attentive to the Duties of his Office, and that he keeps a *Steady Look out* on every Side, yet if he be not an *honest Man*, he may be just as useless, altho' not so innocent, as if he were fast asleep. He may possibly see an House on Fire, and give no Alarm ; because he sees some of his *Comrades* below, watching for an Opportunity of Plunder ; of which he is sure to come in for his Share, as the Reward of his Silence. Or suppose him to be as honest as a Man of a little Heart and narrow Soul can possibly be, and that he were resolved to do his Duty, if it could be done with Security to himself ; yet it may so happen, that a just Discharge of his Duty may expose him to the Resentment of his *Betters*, who would neither want Will nor Power to distress him, to stop his Salary, to remove him from his Post ; and, perhaps, render him incapable of ever recovering it again. A Consideration----that hath frightened many an honest weak Man out of his Senses, and made him as incapable of seeing, hearing, or speaking, as if he had been absolutely born deaf, dumb, and blind. Now let

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me ask you,----if you, or any Friend of yours, should have the Misfortune to be ruined by the Negligence, the Treachery or Cowardice of such a Watchman, what would you not think, what would you not say of him ? Could you forbear loading him with Reproach, at least, if not with Curses ? ---- Which were I to hear and be conscious of to my self; that I had been the sole Author of putting such a worthless Fellow into his Employment, I should blush to my self; and think every Reproach and Curse discharged at his Head, were directly and deservedly levelled at mine. The Case, in short, is finely represented in Scripture * : *If in Time of War, the People of the Land take a Man of their Coast, and set him for their Watchman ; if when he seeth the Sword come upon their Land, he blow the Trumpet, and warn the People, then whoever heareth the Sound of the Trumpet, and taketh not Warning, if the Sword come and take him away, his Blood shall be upon his own Head ; he heard the Sound of the Trumpet, and took not Warning, his Blood shall be upon him ; but he that taketh Warning, shall deliver his own Soul. But if the Watchman see the Sword come, and blow not the Trumpet, and the People be not warned, if the Sword come and take away any Person from among them, he is taken away in his Iniquity, but his Blood shall be required at the Watchman's Hand.* And if I had the making of such a Watchman, I should have great Reason to fear, that both his Blood and theirs too would finally be required of me.

They are, sixthly, *Spiritual Guides*. Now the least that could be expected from a Guide would be, that he should have Eyes to see, and Experience to know and chuse his Way, and Honesty enough not to mislead those, who were committed to his Direction: If he were absolutely blind, he would be absolutely incapable of doing his Duty ; if he had his Eye-sight, but were utterly a Stranger to the Road, he would be almost as incapable of guiding them, as if he were quite

blind ; but if he could be supposed so ignorant, and so wicked, as to persuade himself, that there was really no such City, as that, to which they were travelling, and to which he pretended to guide them ; and yet would undertake the Office, purely for the sake of the Reward ; He would either lead them at Random, till he could fairly leave them to shift for themselves, or betray them into the Hands of *Banditti* and *Robbers*, who would join with them in the Plunder, and Murder of the unhappy Travellers. Could any Punishment equal the Guilt of such a treacherous Guide ? If the Blind lead the Blind, the Consequence is obvious and certain, if the Ignorant lead the Ignorant, the Case is much the same ; but if Robbers and Murderers undertake to guide the ignorant and credulous Traveller, nothing but Ruin and Destruction can ensue. And the Guilt will certainly rest upon those, who had Authority to compel the poor Travellers to accept of such a Guide as they should appoint, and would refuse to allow them a better.

They are, seventhly, *Ambassadors*. An Office of great Dignity and Trust, that requires great Abilities to discharge it worthily, to the Honour of his Prince, and the Importance of his Commission. Now, if such an Honour were unhappily conferred upon an unworthy Creature, without common Abilities and common Honesty, judge you what a contemptible, detestable Figure he must make. See him adorned with all the Ensigns of Honour, requisite to give him Credit, and support his Character among Foreigners, a Royal Appointment for his Attendance and his Table, and whatever may contribute to support and adorn his Title and Commission : Should you see this poor Wretch, when he comes into the Country to which he is sent, intirely neglect the Business of his Employment, flutter about with his Equipage and Attendants, and spend his Salary in unworthy Company and Diversions ; what would you think of him ? Or should he have Honesty and Sense enough to go to Court, deliver his Credentials, and take upon him the Exercise of his Office ; which he had not Ability, or Integrity enough

enough to execute : Should he, through Ignorance or Cowardice, so far prostitute the Dignity of his Character, as to dishonour his Prince, and sacrifice the real Interest of his Country ; what Contempt, what Punishment would he not deserve ?---- But should he be yet more wicked, and exercise his Negligence to his intimate Friends and Bottle-Companions, by assuring them, That all this Solemnity of Title and Figure were nothing but grave Farce and Ridicule, that he had really no such Master, nor had received any such Commission, but was only acting a gainful Part, for the Interest, and by the Direction of wiser Heads than his own, for certain political Purposes, which were not proper for him to own.----A Supposition so monstrous can only be exceeded by the Wickedness and Folly of an impious, unbelieving Clergy-man, who pretends a Commission from God, whom in his Heart he denies, and disbelieves, that whole Revelation, which the Devils believe and tremble at.

They are, lastly, *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*. And we know that it is required of all Stewards, that they be skillful and faithful in the Discharge of their Office. Let not the Word *Mysteries* move your Spleen. Whatever you and I may think of it, it is, however, a good Argument, *ad hominem*. For surely it ought, as a common Justice, to be presumed, that every Christian Clergy-man believes them ; or if he doth not, that he would have Honour enough fairly to own it, to quit his Preferment and disclaim his Character, and deal as honestly with the World as you and I do. By his Designation of their Office, they are obliged to study, and be able and ready to defend these sacred Mysteries, (as they suppose them) against all Opposers. They are to convince the sober and rational Enquirer, of the Ground and Necessity of this Belief, and the necessary Connection there is betwixt Orthodox Faith, unprejudiced Reason, and sound Morality, in promoting all the Purposes of true Religion here, and ever-lasting Happiness hereafter. Now, if an unbelieving Patron were to dispose of a good Benefice, he would undoubtedly bestow it upon one of his own Way of thinking,

thinking, who believed as little of these mysterious Articles as himself. Well ! how (think you ?) would such a Man behave himself in the Care of his Flock ? To be sure he would never take pains to preach such Doctrines, or press the Necessity of such Articles as he did not believe himself. He might be too politick, perhaps, directly to deny or oppose them ; for Negatives are untractable Things ; and till the Boundaries and Fences of Orthodoxy be absolutely destroyed, and Christianity cease to be the Religion of the State, there might be some Appearance of Danger ; because the Creeds and Liturgy of the Church are made by Act of Parliament, part of the Law of the Land ; his Business therefore would be either never to trouble himself with his Hearers about such intricate Points, or if he did, to mention them with a philosophical Indifference, as Matters of doubtful Disputation, and to lay all the Stress of their Duty upon those plain and obvious Duties of Morality, upon which the Sober and the Learned, in all Ages and all Nations, have been agreed. That an upright, sober, polite Morality is absolutely necessary to make us acceptable to God and Man, — but if, after all, it should appear (perhaps too late) that the *Mysteries* of revealed Religion stand upon an eternal, unshaken Foundation ; that without such Faith it is impossible to please God ; that the reverend Use of the two Sacraments, which depend absolutely upon that Faith, is necessary to Salvation ; which hath been strongly and rationally debated by Men of great Learning and fine Understanding ; to whom, I must confess, I have never yet seen a satisfactory Answer : If, I say, this should at last prove to be the Case, how sad will the Condition of those Men be who have had such a Teacher ; and what a faithless *Steward of the Mysteries of God* will he be found, who hath all along disowned his having any such Thing committed to his Charge ? And how far the Patron will be involved in the same Guilt, I leave them to judge.

Let us now consider the present State of Patronage; especially in this Part of our Island, which is under Episcopal Government.

The great Patrons of all Ecclesiastical Dignities are,

1. The King.
2. The Lord-High Chancellor.
3. The Arch-Bishops, and Bishops.

1. The King is the sole Fountain of Honour and Dignity, in all Cases, and to all Persons, as well Ecclesiastical as Civil. For the Lord-Chancellor, and their Lordships the Bishops, being made solely by the King, may be considered only as the King's Agents, or Deputies in Ecclesiastical Promotions; they being as so many Pipes and Channels to convey the Royal Favour to those, who are too far removed from the Royal Presence, to receive any immediate Comfort or Blessing from it; and who will be sure never to bestow it, but on those whom they know to be worthy. In this Respect, *happy, thrice happy* is the Church of *England*, under the Patronage and Protection of a *most religious and gracious King*; whose most illustrious Title is that of *supreme Governor of the Church, and Defender of the Faith*; and who, considered under either of these Characters, neither will, nor can do, any Thing to the Prejudice of the established Church. He cannot be insensible, that this would be not only acting in contradiction to his Character, as Head of the Church, and Defender of the Faith, and to all the Engagements of his Coronation Oath; but sapping his own Authority, and destroying the best and truest Support of his Authority and Government, I mean *Conscience and a just Sense of Religion*. Now that can only be supported among the People, by the Influence and Example of their Spiritual Guides. When they see them living and acting, as well as talking like Christians; when they shall

shall see them zealous of good Works, jealous for the Glory of God, and Interests of true Religion ; not influenced by secular Views of worldly Interest or Power, but despising and opposing every Temptation, that may be thrown in their Way, to desert or betray the Trust committed to their Charge : Such as these will shine as *Lights in the World* ; the People, that see them will reverence and esteem them, will gladly submit to their Directions, and follow their Examples, and acknowledge that God is in them of a Truth, when they see them live agreeably to their Characters, and believe and practise themselves, what they preach to others. But if a Prince should ever be so unhappy as to promote a Set of covetous, ambitious, time-serving Seekers, only to be the Tools of Power ; the Influence of such Examples on the Minds of the People, must be prodigiously Evil, and the Credit of Religion must sink to the same Level with the Credit of its Teachers. Experience, therefore, hath shewn, that it hath never been good Policy, especially in *England*, to reduce the Credit of the *Clergy*, and by Consequence of Religion, too low in the Opinion of the People. Certain it is, no Laws can be framed, no human Authority can be sufficient to restrain ambitious, turbulent, and seditious Spirits. There is no Security like Conscience. When People are convinced that Rebellion and Resistance of the supreme Power is a damnable Sin, they will then be subject not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake ; which the *Clergy* cannot inculcate with any Hopes of Success, further than their Credit with the Laity can engage their Attention and Regard. But if ever they should see the highest Dignities of the Church, conferred as a Reward for the most obsequious Compliances with the Court, it will naturally weaken and abate that Reverence, that is due to their Ecclesiastical Superiors, they will be tempted to imagine, that every Thing they say to them is the Language of the Court, rather than either Law or Gospel, and therefore pay no more regard to it, than they do to the Charge of a Judge at the Assizes, who hath received his Instructions beforehand from the Court ;
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and is particularly directed, what to tell the Country. This insensibly draws the free-thinking and unthinking Majority into a Disesteem and Suspicion of the Truth of Religion in general ; whose Foundation they can never think to be divine, when they see it intirely plaid as an Engine of State, and directed by the most corrupt Maxims of State-Policy. Hence they are persuaded by Atheists and Deists to resolve all into Priest-craft, directed by a superior State-craft. This gives the full Reins to all Leudness, Immorality, and Rebellion, where there is the least Prospect of Success or Impunity. But even here, the State will find themselves much mistaken in their Politicks ; and that all their Schemes of Security from such a State of Things will end in Disappointment and Confusion. For, if Religion were a State-craft, it would answer no political Purposes, unless the People were taught to believe the direct Contrary, that the whole was a *Divine Institution* ; and that the *Clergy* acted by Virtue of a *Divine Commission*, which they never will, nor can believe, whilst they see the Governors of the Church exercising almost no Ecclesiastical Power, but in Dependence, and by Direction of the State. No rational Man will call any Thing *Religion*, but what he thinks to be *Divine* ; that is, commanded immediately by God ; and that whatsoever is so, is wholly independent and unalterable by any human Power whatsoever. And to say the plain Truth, this is it, which hath made so many *Deists* among the Gentry, and so many *Dissenters* among the common People of *England*. The *Dissenters*, one and all, pretend to *Divine Commission*, independent of all the Powers on Earth ; therefore the common People flock to them, and look upon the Church of *England*, as a State-Religion, or a Parliamentary Establishment. And the *Deists*, whilst they observe the Conduct of their Superiors, and the political Direction and Restraints of Ecclesiastical Power and Discipline, if they should ever find themselves sitting in *Committees of Religion*, they can never think there is any Thing more Divine in a controverted Point of Religion, than in a controverted Election, since both

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are to be determined by the Votes of the Majority. Upon these Considerations we are morally certain, that a wise and religious Prince will never do any Thing to the Prejudice and Discredit of Religion, and by Consequence will never fill the highest Offices of the Church with Men of such Inability or ill Principles, as may disgrace their Order, and make Religion it self contemptible.

But should we, or our Posterity, be ever so unhappy as to see a Papist, a Presbyterian, an Heretick, or an Infidel on the Throne of these Kingdoms, which God forbid ! But it is by no Means an impossible Supposition, for what hath been may be, and no human Prudence can foresee or prevent such a dreadful Contingency ; in such a Case, there is no doubt to be made, but each would prefer Men of their own Principles and Complexions, Men that would serve their Lusts, and gratify their Ambition, or at least such as would comply with every Thing, and not dare to reprove their Faults, or tell them their Duty. By these Means it would be in the Power of the vilest Favourites and Instruments in Iniquity, to sell the best Preferments in the Church to the best Bidder ; altho' he had no other Kind of Merit, but that of giving a valuable Consideration. This must necessarily tend to make Religion appear to the undiscerning, the illiterate, and injudicious, which are much the greater Part of Mankind, to be not only an empty Name, but a Cheat and Imposition upon Mankind, when they see it so prostituted to the vilest Purposes of Leudness, Ambition, and Covetousness.

There is one Difficulty yet behind : It may so happen that a well-disposed Prince, of a most gracious Disposition, and upright Intention, may yet be betrayed through an excessive Easiness and Credulity, into an improper and unhappy Choice of Ministers both in Church and State. A Prince, that is resolved to see with his own Eyes, and hear with his own Ears, cannot easily be deceived in the Choice of proper Persons to fill the highest Stations, in both. But if thro' Diffidence or Indolence he delegate his whole Authority

to a favourite Minister, and resign himself absolutely to his Direction, he thereby makes him not only his *Premier* in Temporals, but his *Vice-gerent* in *Spirituals*, with Consequences no less dangerous to his own Royal Person and Authority, than to the Interest and Security of Church and State. In a Nation divided into Factions and Parties, which is too often the Case of all Nations more or less, there will be perpetual Struggles for Power and Establishment; and out of whichever Party the Minister is chosen, he will naturally consider himself as the Head and Representative of that Party, whom he must support and strengthen, that they may be able to support him; which can only be done by Power, and keeping up a good Majority in both Houses of Parliament. And as the Bishops are known to have great Weight in the Upper House, it is natural for him to prefer none but such as give him full Security, for their entire Attachment to his Person and Interest. If, in full Confidence of his Integrity, upright Intentions, and publick Spirit, he should determine to prefer none, but Men of distinguished Learning, Piety, and Courage, he need never be at a loss to find out proper Persons so qualified: But if he want a Set of *Thoroughs* (as Sir *Humphry Poleworth*, of immortal Memory, used to call them,) such are always to be found in the *Purlieus* of a Court, waiting for Vacancies, and ready to accept them upon the Terms of their Patron. The Consequence of this must quickly be a Contempt of publick Spirit and political Virtue, of good Learning, sound Morals, and true Religion, as Things of no Use or Consideration towards procuring Preferment, which they see solely bestowed upon political Considerations. The Principles of the Minister and his Party are digested into a kind of *political Creed*; which is as absolutely necessary for obtaining Preferment, as the Articles of the Christian Faith are for obtaining Salvation. I remember I once saw the Form of such a Creed, drawn up in a late Reign, by a very merry Writer, to this Effect: *I believe my Lord*** to be the best and wisest Man in England, the King only excepted; that all he says is true, and all he doth is just and right;*

right ; and whoever thinks otherwise, is either a *Knave*, or a *Fool*, an *Enemy* to his Country and his own Interest, and deserves never to be admitted to any Office or Trust, Ecclesiastical, Military or Civil, from this Time forth for evermore. Amen. Very concise ; -----but very comprehensive ; including every Thing, that is necessary to be believed by any Man that intends to rise by the Interest of a Party. I would not be thought to mean any particular Minister or Party. Parties consider'd as Parties are all alike: they differ only as a *Black Bull* may do from a *White one* in Size, and Strength, and Colour. The strongest is always in the Right, and the weakest always in the Wrong. The first resolved, at all Adventures, to support it self ; the other watching all Advantages to perplex their Counsels, to distress their Administration, and set their whole Conduct in the most odious Lights, in hopes of procuring a Change, and getting the Reins into their own Hands. Upon the Whole, we may venture to pronounce, that a wise and good Prince will never knowingly prefer an unworthy Man to any of those eminent Stations in the Church ; and that a weak or irreligious Prince, or cunning Minister, will never but by chance prefer a good one. A projecting Head, a voluble Tongue, and a supple Conscience, will be a more successful Recommendation than the Knowledge of an Angel, the Piety of a Saint, or the Courage of a Martyr.

The next great Lay-Patron is the Lord-High-Chancellor, who hath a Right of presenting to every Benefice belonging to the Crown under the Value of 20 l. *per Ann.* in the King's Books. The Reason of this is generally said to be, that he had formerly several Clergymen constantly attending him in the Execution of his Office, who were a Sort of Assessors or Assistants upon some particular Occasions, as particularly in Causes of a religious Nature, where, as *Keeper of the King's Conscience*, he was to determine rather by the Laws of God and revealed Religion, or Canon Law, (which at that Time was esteemed a necessary Branch of Learning for every Clergyman) rather than by the Forms of civil or common Law. On which Account,
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it hath been generally thought, the Kings of England formerly used to prefer some Bishop of eminent Sanctity and Learning to that High Office. These Clergymen always attended the Lord Chancellor, as those now do, who are called *Clerks in Chancery*, and who were not permitted to marry, till a Statute was made on purpose to enable them in the Reign of *Henry VIII.* And that the Lord Chancellor might be enabled to gratify these Clerks, he had the Privilege of bestowing those Benefices given him by the Crown. And a very great Privilege it is, as he presents not only to several very valuable parochial Cures, but to several Dignities in the Cathedral Churches, as *Rocheſter, Glouceſter, Briſtol, &c.* Which Preferments, as they were intended to be the distinguishing Rewards of diſtinguiſh'd Merit, were certainly never lodged in better Hands, than they are at preſent. If univerſal Knowledge, conſummate Prudence and Experience, and unaffected Piety and Zeal for Religion, can give us any Security, we are morally certain, that his * Lordſhip can never prefer an ill Man, nor diſcountenance a good one. I have been credibly informed, that when the Lord Chancellor *Finch*, was firſt promoted to the *Seal*, he uſed often to ſay, That the Patronage of Eccleſiaſtical Preferments was the greateſt Burden annexed to his Office ; and that after many ſerious and pious Reflections upon it, he one Day addreſſed himſelf to his Chaplain *Dr. Sharp*, afterwards Lord Archbiſhop of *York*, (whom he loved and truſted as a Friend, and honoured as his Confeſſor and ſpiritual Guide) to this Effect : *The greateſt Difficulty, I apprehend, in the Execution of my Office, is the Patronage of Eccleſiaſtical Preferments, God is my Witneſs, that I would not knowingly prefer an unworthy Perſon ; but as my Courſe of Life and Studies hath lain another Way, I cannot think my ſelf ſo good a Judge of the Merits of ſuch Suitors as you are ; I therefore charge it upon your Conſcience, as you will answer it to Almighty God, that upon every ſuch Occaſion, you make the beſt Enquiry, and give me the beſt Advice you can, that I may never beſtow any Favour upon an undeſerving Man ; which if you neglect to do, the Guilt will be intirely yours, and I ſhall deliver my own Soul.*

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* Sir Philip York, Lord Baron of Harcwick,

The next great Patrons are the most Reverend the Archbishops and Bishops. And methinks there is at first Sight such an apparent Congruity betwixt Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Patronage, that I am often tempted to wish, they had more Interest and Power in this Respect, than at Present they seem to have ; that they had as much Power in the Government of the Church, as the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations have in their respective Provinces : Or, which is yet more to the Purpose, and comes nearer to the Case, as much as the several great Companies of this City enjoy by Virtue of their respective Charters : At least, that they had as much under Christian Kings, as they enjoyed under *Heathen* Emperors. Every Thing, that is venerable and sacred, is implied in the Office and Character of a Bishop ; their Education, Course of Studies and Employment, should make them better Judges of the Merit and Qualifications of Clergymen, than Lay-Patrons can generally be supposed to be. Which gives us the highest Security, that the Power of electing proper Persons to supply the several Vacancies in their own Episcopal Colleges, and providing for the Necessities of the Church upon all emergent Occasions, can never be deposited in safer Hands than their own. You cannot but remember, when I just mentioned this in the Company, Sir *Harry* lost all Patience, and affirmed they made as many unworthy Promotions as any Layman of them all. He declared upon his own Knowledge, that one of them had preferred three such good-for-nothing Fellows in one Neighbourhood, that a Man of Probity and Character would be ashamed to be seen in their Company. If the Fact be true, for which we have no other Evidence, but the Word and Honour of a very angry Man ; this is a strong Argument on my Side of the Question, and charges the whole Guilt imputed to the Bishop upon those, who preferred such an unworthy Person to the Episcopal Dignity : Had the filling that vacant See been left to the rest of the Comprovincials, according to the most primitive Usage, I dare say, they would have shewn so much

much regard to the Good of the Church, the Interest of Religion, the Dignity of their Office, and the Credit of their Order, as to provide a more proper Person than (it seems by this Account) hath been provided for them.

But the greatest Part of the parochial Cures are in the Gift of the two Universities, the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom. The Universities are under such Regulations, that they have been seldom or never known to prefer an unworthy Person, and it is a foul Reproach upon the Nobility and Gentry of *England* to suppose them so destitute of Honour and Conscience, as to abuse so sacred a Trust, as is that of Ecclesiastical Patronage, by preferring such Numbers of unworthy Clergymen as the Enemies of their Order would seem to insinuate. From whence we humbly presume, that the Charge is false, and cannot be supported: not that we pretend to say, there is no Ground at all for the Accusation; in such a numerous Body as the Clergy of *England*, there are, no doubt, too many irregular, undeserving Members; and considering the present State of Things, it is morally impossible it should be otherwise. The many indirect Influences to which they stand exposed; the poor Endowments of too many parochial Cures, and the present, general, and unavoidable Relaxation of Church-Discipline, cannot fail to produce several Irregularities, which the wisest and best of their Order condemn and lament, but can neither prevent nor cure.

Well! (say you) what then must be done? Good-faith (my Friend) you ask me a very hard Question; I cannot tell what *must be done*. But I can tell what *may be done*; and what perhaps in Conscience and good Policy ought to be done.-----*Give unto Cæsar the Things, which are Cæsar's; unto GOD, the Things which are GOD's. Date Cæsari, quæ Cæsaris sunt; Deo, quæ sunt Dei.* What should hinder the restoring the Government and Discipline of the Church to its primitive Institution? What possible Danger can there be in restoring to the Episcopal College, who are the Governors and Representatives of the Church, those original, inherent

inherent Rights and Immunities, which are essential to her as a Society, and which every incorporate Body of Men claim as essential to their very Being, and absolutely necessary for their Preservation. I mean the Power of *electing their own Governors*, and enacting Laws for the better Government of its Members; so that they be not inconsistent with the Laws of the Land. I am sanguine enough to imagine, that the State would find their Account in it, upon a political View, as well as the Church, if there were no other Reason to persuade or hope for such a Change. On which Account, I have often wonder'd, that so many learned and religious Prelates, who have so near Access to the Throne, have so long neglected to represent this Grievance, in the most dutiful and affecting Manner, to those, who have it in their Power to redress it, and who cannot be supposed to want Inclination to do what Religion, Justice, Policy, and Interest recommend to their Attention and Regard.

In order to set this Matter in a clearer Light, let us look back to the original Institution of the Church, as a Society entirely distinct from the civil Government, and in the Exercise of its spiritual Powers wholly independent upon it. In the Beginning of this Letter I proposed to take no Notice of the Pretensions of the Clergy to a Divine Establishment, antecedent to any human Charters or Constitutions. But as it is beyond dispute, that the Church hath been from the Beginning in Possession of such a Claim, which they profess themselves ready to make good against all Opposers; so it is amply recognized by the Law of the Land; of which our Liturgy, Canons, and Book of Homilies are a Part in which the independent Power of the Church (in Matters purely spiritual) is fully and plainly acknowledged. It will be necessary to look back to that original Charter, by which these divine and spiritual Powers have been conveyed to them.-----I see you begin to look arch upon my serious Apology for spiritual Power; but consider I speak the Language of my Clients, as any unbelieving Council would do, if he were retained by a good Fee to plead on this Side of the Question.

Question. And, if it be thought no Absurdity for the greatest Infidel to swear upon the four Gospels, in Confirmation of the Evidence he shall give upon any Matter in Question, before a Court of Judicature: I hope, it will not be thought unreasonable in us to insist upon their Authority, and appeal to them as authentick Records and proper Evidence in the Case before us; which will directly admit of no other, however it may be corroborated by the concurrent Testimonies and uniform Practice of the Church, even from the apostolical Times.

The Gospels then positively and plainly assert, That there is **A GOVERNMENT** in the Church, and **ONE SUPREME GOVERNOR**, even **JESUS CHRIST**; whom all, that profess to believe in him, acknowledge to be the **SUPREME LORD** (a), who died for us all, that they, who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, that died for them and rose again. The Church therefore (b), which he hath purchased by his Blood, is hereby made subject unto him; and he is the Head or chief Ruler of it. (c) The Lord hath given unto him the Throne of his Father David; he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever: and of his Kingdom there shall be no End. (d) God hath put all Things under his Feet, and given him to be the **HEAD** over all Things to the Church. (e) All Power is given to him both in Heaven and Earth. This Power before his Ascension into Heaven, he delegated to certain Persons, whom he sent into the World, with the same extensive Commission, which he himself had received from his Father. (f) As my Father sent me, even so send I you. This Authority and Commission the Apostle Paul frequently insists upon in his Epistles; and calls it the Authority, (g) which the Lord had given him, and the rest of the Apostles. So he tells the *Corinthians*, that they were not to account of him and the other Pastors of the Church as their Ministers or Servants, but (h) as the *Ministers of God, and Stewards of the*

(a) 2 Cor. v. 15. (b) Acts xx. 28. (c) Luke i. 32. (d) Eph. i. 22.
(e) Mat. xxviii. 18. (f) John xx. 21. (g) 2 Cor. x. 8. (h) 1 Cor. iv. 1.

Mysteries of Christ. And declares that both he and they were (i) *Ambassadors for Christ*; intimating that they had received a full and ample Commission immediately from the Fountain of all Power, *Jesus Christ* himself, in the same Extent and to the same Purposes that he himself had received it from the Father. This divine Commission, by which they represented the Person of their Master, intitled them to a great Degree of Respect and Obedience from their spiritual Subjects and Inferiors. On which Account the Apostle to the *Hebrews* commands them (k) *to obey them, that had the Rule over them, and submit themselves.* And that the Obedience required in this Place is not meant to temporal but spiritual Governors, is evident from the following Words: (k) *For they watch for your Souls as they, that must give Account.* By virtue of this divine Commission, they collected, settled, and governed the several Churches, which, by their Preaching and Miracles, they had converted to the Faith; and for three hundred Years together, vigorously and gloriously supported the Apostolical Authority, where the Civil Government was so far from lending the least Assistance or Protection, that they imployed all their Rage and Power to persecute and suppress it. And, although they were perfectly obedient in Civil Matters to the Temporal Powers, to whom they preached up Obedience in all Things lawful, under the Penalty of Damnation; yet when they were opposed by the Rulers in the Execution of their Office, and forbid to preach the Gospel to the People, they did by no means think themselves bound to obey, because they wisely judged (m) *it to be more right to hearken to God, rather than to Man.* Therefore, notwithstanding all the Opposition they met with, and all the Persecution they suffered from the Temporal Powers, in the Execution of their Commission; they ceased not to exercise the Authority committed to them by Christ, and to fulfil the Will of him, that sent them. They preached the Gospel, they gathered and settled Churches among the People, whom by their

(i) 2 Cor. v. 20. (k) Heb. xiii. 17. (m) Acts iv. 19.

Preaching they had converted, performing all the Duties and Functions of Ecclesiastical Governors. And God himself testified his Approbation of their Proceedings in this Affair, by the wonderful Gifts and Graces he bestowed upon them, and the miraculous Works he enabled them to perform. The Church therefore, and the Governors of it, depend immediately upon Christ, receiving all their Power and Authority from him only.

The **FIRST BISHOP** in the Christian Church was **JESUS CHRIST** himself: called therefore by *Peter (m) the Shepherd and BISHOP of our Souls*. His twelve Apostles were his Presbyters, his seventy Disciples were as it were his Deacons. Whilst he lived upon Earth, he governed his Church in his Person; his Apostles had Authority to preach and baptize, and to pronounce Remission of Sins, which is the Priest's Office now; yet could they not perform that Office, peculiarly Episcopal, of giving others a Commission to act with Authority in the Government and Direction of the Church. But when Christ was risen from the Dead, and ready to ascend into Heaven, then he enlarged the Apostolical Power, and gave them Authority to collect and settle Churches; and give Commission to others, as he himself had given to them. *(n) As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (o) And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Signifying to them, by this Emblem of breathing on them, that they should in a short Time be *(o) baptized with the Holy Ghost, and be endued with Power from above, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them.* And therefore, when they had received the Holy Ghost upon the Day of Pentecost, they began to collect and settle the Church, and govern it by those Rules, which they had received from their Master and Founder. The Apostles had hereby an additional Power to their first Commission. Their Master had sent them out to preach, and to baptize in his own Life-time; but now he sends them, even as he himself had been sent by the Father. It is certain, they could not be sent as Medi-

(m) 1 Pet. ii. 25. (n) John xx. 21. (o) Acts i. 5. 8.

tors and Redeemers as he was. (p) *For there is but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.* This new Commission therefore must be understood only of the Authority of Government, Jurisdiction, and Discipline in the Church, which Christ himself had received of the Father; and of ordaining others to the same Office, by virtue of their first Ordination. Whilst Christ continued with them in the Flesh, they had a Commission to preach the Gospel; but by this last, when they were to supply the Place of their absent Master, they themselves also communicated to others, that Episcopal Authority, which themselves had received from the *Chief Bishop*, that there might be a continual uninterrupted Succession of Ecclesiastical Governors to the End of the World. At the granting of which Commission their Master gave them a solemn Promise of his special Blessing, Protection and Assistance for the due Discharge and Execution of it through all Ages of the World (p), *And lo I am with you always to the End of the World*; which as it could not be meant of his bodily Presence, who was then about to be taken up into Heaven, must necessarily be understood of his spiritual Presence, Authority and Protection over those, who should from thenceforth duly receive, and worthily execute this divine Commission to the End of the World.

Pardon me, I see you begin to yawn at this solemn Account of Spiritual Power and Ecclesiastical Authority; but we cannot help it, it is necessary to clear the Foundation of our Claim, which can no otherwise be done than by appealing to our Charter; which however it has been disputed, and ridiculed by the Enemies of the Clergy, still subsists without Corruption or Mutilation; it is in every Body's Hands, and by good Fortune hath from time to time been acknowledged as an authentick Record by the Laws of the Land. It may perhaps appear but a dry Story to an unconcerned By-Stander. But to us, who are Parties deeply interested in the Issue of this Affair, it appears in a very

(p) 1 Tim. ii. 5. (p) Matth. xxviii. 20.

different Light; and what may seem to be wanting in fine Thoughts and elegant Language is abundantly made up to us by strong and unquestionable Evidence on our side of the Question. The Examination of Charters and old Records hath nothing very entertaining to a Man of a lively Fancy and fine Imagination like your own, but it gives a noble and rational Pleasure to the Council as well as to the Client, when they find there any Thing that may determine a Dispute, by securing a Right or Property in possession, or recovering a lost one. A Man in sound Health, high Spirits, and an easy Fortune, would find but little Entertainment in reading one of *Friend's* or *Rateliff's* Prescriptions, or perusing a long Bill in Chancery. But a Man under a decaying Constitution, a disputed Title, and an empty Pocket, would find more Beauties in the Prescription of an able Physician, the Opinion of a skilful Lawyer, or a Bank-Bill of 1000 L. than in 10,000 the finest Lines, that could be found in *Homer* or *Virgil*. ——— This by the bye ———

Here then you see the Plan of a Divine Charter, a spiritual Commission conveying such Privileges, guarded by such Immunities and Sanctions, as all the Powers upon Earth can neither give, nor alter, nor take away; a Commission, not confined to this World, not limited to any particular Period of Time, but extended even to the next World and the Interests of Eternity, entirely distinct from every branch of civil and temporal Authority, and independent of it. ——— Mistake me not, I neither say, nor mean that the Clergy as Delegates and Deputies under Christ, and Governors of his Church, are exempt from the Power of temporal Princes, and the Jurisdiction of secular Authority. By no means! — As Subjects, they owe the same Obedience to the civil Power, that all other Subjects do, and under the same Penalty of Damnation, if they resist. For the Power of the Church is merely spiritual. Christ himself would never exercise any temporal Authority, neither gave he any such to his Apostles or their Successors. But the Power which he himself exercised upon Earth, and at his Ascension into Heaven gave to his Apostles and their Successors, was such a Power as the Civil Magistrate never

never had, and which could make no Encroachment on the temporal Prerogative. The temporal Power extends only to the Bodies and Goods of the Subjects, but the spiritual affects neither of these, but the Soul only. The Power then of the Church and the State are entirely different from each other upon all Accounts: The first is purely spiritual, and exercised only in spiritual Matters, which are no part of the Civil Magistrate's Office, such as preaching the Word of God, administering the Sacraments to such as are worthy, and suspending and depriving of Communion the obstinately impenitent, absolving penitent Sinners, and ordaining proper Persons for the Execution of those spiritual Acts of Jurisdiction. But the Civil Magistrate acts in a quite different Sphere, and in a quite different Manner. He uses the Sword, and punishes the Breach of temporal Laws with temporal Penalties, such as Fines, Confiscations, Imprisonment, Banishment and Death. He may justly punish even penitent Sinners, whom the Church upon their true Repentance has absolved from spiritual Censures; and he may remit the temporal Punishments due to impenitent Offenders, whilst they lie under the just Censure of their spiritual Superiors. The civil as well as spiritual Superiors may punish for the same Offences, but not in the same way: The former inflict temporal Punishments, the other spiritual: The former have the Power of the Sword, the latter of the Keys. In a word, these two Powers are co-ordinate, perfectly distinct, and may very well subsist the one without the other. There have been in all Ages States and Kingdoms wisely governed, where there was no spiritual Power, nor Society at all; and it is well known, that the Christian Church for full three hundred Years together stood and prospered, in the full Exercise of her whole Ecclesiastical Authority, under the most violent Opposition, and cruel Persecutions from the civil Power.

But you will say, perhaps, this is an indirect way of denying or questioning the King's Supremacy, which both the Scriptures and the Laws of the Land have declared, and which all Ecclesiastical Persons are bound solemnly to recognize, and acknowledge him to be *in all Causes, and over all Persons as well Ecclesiastical as Civil,*

Civil, in all his Dominions and Countries, supreme.

By no means. We confess and acknowledge that all Persons of what Rank or Condition, State or Quality soever, are subject to the temporal Government, under which they live, and that the Clergy owe the same Allegiance to the supreme Power, under whose Protection they live, as the Laity do. The Apostle's Command is general and absolute, (a) *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers*, without any Exception or Limitation. Nor does this Power depend upon the Religion of the Prince; for this Precept was given, when the chief Magistrate was a Heathen and a Persecutor. *Nero* and *Dioclesian* were as much entitled to it, as *Constantine* or *Theodosius*. Jesus Christ himself, whilst on Earth, acknowledged, and submitted to the *Roman* Governor of *Judea*, and paid Tribute, (b) when demanded of him, as well as the rest of his Countrymen. When he stood before *Pontius Pilate*, he did not demur to the Jurisdiction of the Court, nor the Authority of the Governor, but freely confessed it, and that *he had received it from God* (c). His Apostles and all his faithful Servants followed his Example in this particular. *Paul* when he stood before *Festus*, to answer the several Articles exhibited against him by the Jews, declares (d) *he stood before Cæsar's Judgment-Seat, where he ought to be judged*; and therefore pleads, (e) *that neither against the Law of the Jews, neither against the Temple, nor yet against Cæsar, had he offended any Thing at all*. Nay, the *Roman* Catholicks themselves, who are not bigotted to the Court of *Rome*, have acknowledged all Persons without exception to be subject to the civil Magistrate. Thus the Faculty of *Paris*, *Anno* 1663, declared, that all Subjects owed such Allegiance to their King, that no Power upon Earth could upon any Pretence whatsoever absolve them from it. And several of the Missionaries in this Kingdom have made the like Declarations, and would not recant, although they have been censured and excommunicated by the Pope for so doing, as is evident from the *Causa Valeriana* (published

(a) Rom. xiii. 1. (b) Matth. xxvii. 27. (c) Joha. xix. 11. (d) Acts xv. 7. (e) Acts xxv. 8.

at London by Peter Walsh, a Franciscan Fryar, and printed by J. Bruns 1684) Let me give you from thence the Words of Part of a Protestation made by the Roman Catholick Clergy of Ireland, signed by a Bishop and above twenty other Regulars and Seculars of that Communion. The Words are these, *We profess, that all absolute Princes and supreme Magistrates, of what Religion soever they be, are God's Viceregents upon Earth, and to them respectively, according to the Laws of every Commonwealth, Obedience is due in Civil and Temporal Matters; and for this Cause we protest against all Doctrine and Authority to the contrary.* So far we all agree about the Power of the Prince over all Ecclesiastical Persons. The greatest Difficulty is about Ecclesiastical Causes, and Matters purely Spiritual. Here the common Distinction hath its true and proper Use. He has Authority * *circa sacra*, but not in *sacris*. He cannot ordain a Priest, or consecrate a Church; he cannot administer the Sacraments, he cannot excommunicate an impenitent Sinner, nor absolve a Penitent, nor execute any Part of the sacerdotal Office. Yet in the Direction, Regulation, and Protection of the Church and its Ministers in the Exercise of their respective Offices, in enforcing the Ecclesiastical Discipline by the temporal Authority, and restraining and punishing stubborn and obstinate Offenders with the civil Sword; he hath a great and sufficient Power in all *spiritual Causes*.

Saving therefore all the Rights of temporal Princes, it plainly appears, that the Church as a purely *spiritual Society*, in the Exercise of her spiritual Powers, is entirely independent upon the State, as it subsisted some hundreds of Years in direct opposition to the greatest temporal Powers then upon Earth. Now it is essential to every Society to be invested with such Powers and Privileges, as are necessary for their Support and Security, and to promote the several Purposes and Intentions of their Charter. As particularly, that of chusing their own Governors and Directors: And secondly, of enacting and executing such Laws as may from Time

* About sacred, but not in sacred Things.

to Time be thought necessary for the good of the whole, to meet and consult upon all Emergencies, to censure, punish and expel unworthy Members, and unfaithful Officers, and enforce by proper Penalties, the Obedience and Submission of all the Members of the Society. These have been in all Ages declared to be the inherent original Rights of the Church, which cannot without Treachery be given up, nor without Sacrilege invaded; and that this was the uniform Practice of the Church, appears from every Part of its History. As the Well-being of every Society depends chiefly upon its Directors and Governors, because they have the greatest Power to do good or hurt; therefore where the choice of the Governors of one Society is in the Hands of another Society (as if the Church should make Laws and chuse Ministers for the State in Temporal Matters; or the State *vice versa* for the Church in Matters purely Spiritual) then is that Society entirely subject to the other. And whereas no Society can subsist without meeting and consulting about their Affairs, and giving proper Orders, as Occasion shall require; if one Society cannot meet to consider of their own proper Affairs, nor enact Laws, nor give Directions for the better Regulation and Improvement of the Society, without the Leave and Authority of another Society; then is the former in a Manner dissolved, and its Charter destroyed, because it subsists precariously as to the Exercise of any Power upon the mere Will and Pleasure of another. This is a Degree of Subjection, to which the Roman Governors did never reduce the Church of the Jews: For their High Priests and Elders, their *Sanhedrim* or Great Council met, whenever they pleased, as we frequently find in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. And so we find the Christian Church always did, even whilst she was under a State of Oppression and Persecution. They constantly met together, as Occasion required, to elect Governors and make Laws for the better Government of the Society, without any legal or regular Interposition or Restraint from the Civil Powers. I say *Legal or Regular*, because, although perhaps they might be interrupted and hindered sometimes by the Tyranny and Violence of their Tem-

poral Superiors, yet that was no more than the most regular and legal Convention may suffer from the Violence and Oppression of a powerful Enemy, or tyrannical Prince.

Let us first consider the original State and Institution of Episcopacy, and the constant Methods of supplying their vacant Sees. *The first Bishop*, as I observed before, was JESUS CHRIST himself: The chief Shepherd and BISHOP of Souls, who at his Ascension into Heaven delegated to his Apostles the whole Power, that himself had received from his Father. When the Apostles had for some Time exercised this Episcopal Authority by themselves, because the Number of the Faithful daily increased, and they themselves could not live always, that the Church might not want proper Governors, invested with the same Authority, to supply their Places, they ordained others by virtue of their divine Commission, and set them over particular Churches, that they might ordain Presbyters, and govern their respective Flocks, committed to their Charge. For, as the Apostolical Commission extended to all Parts of the World, being authorized (a) to teach, (or make Disciples of) all Nations (b); *To go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*: So it was impossible it should be long fixed or confined to any one particular Place, and therefore it was necessary, that Pastors and Teachers should be settled in every Congregation of Believers, who might continue to instruct and teach them, to offer up Prayers for them in the publick Assemblies, administer the Holy Sacraments, and perform all other sacerdotal Offices among them: Hereupon (c) *They ordained them Elders in every Church*; that is, a Bishop, with a competent Number of Presbyters and Deacons to assist him. It hath been a Dispute among the Learned, Whether the Apostles themselves constituted any Archbishops or Metropolitans. Dr. Hammond (d) supposes *Timothy* and *Titus* to be such (e). *Peter de Marcà*, the late learned Archbishop of *Paris*, declares himself of the same Opinion, as doth our late

(a) Matt. xxviii. 19. (b) Mark xvi. 15. (c) Acts xvi. 23. (d) Annot. Acts 11. (e) De concordia Sacerd. & Imp. Lib. 6. c. 1.

learned Bishop, *Beveridge* (f). Whether their Institution was Apostolical or no, it is however certain that it is of very great Antiquity. And the Nature of their Office, although under other Names, frequently mentioned in the Acts and Canons of the most ancient Councils: Such are the Names *Primates*, and *primæ sedis Episcopi*. Thus it is decreed in the 34th Apostolical Canon, That the Bishop shall do nothing without the Primate, except in their own Dioceses, nor the Primate without the Bishops. This was directly the Archiepiscopal or Metropolitan Authority, although the Names of Metropolitan and Archbishop were not introduced into the Church, till the fourth Century.

For the better understanding of this, it will be necessary to observe, that the *Roman* Empire, which contained almost all the known Part of Christendom, was by *Augustus Cæsar* divided into Provinces, which was afterward a little altered by *Adrian I.* and afterwards by *Constantine*, but without any Change in the Nature of Government, only the Seat of the President was removed from one City to another, and the Extent of the Province enlarged or diminished. In each of these Provinces was one City called the Metropolis or Mother City, where was usually the greatest Resort, and the ordinary Residence of the Governour of the Province. The Apostles, who by their Commission from their Master were obliged to proselyte all Nations, could not stay long in any one Place; but having dispersed themselves into the several Provinces, and made some Numbers of Converts, they fixed a Bishop in each of the principal Cities, where they saw it necessary, and gave these Bishops Commission, as other Cities of the Province should be converted, to fix Bishops in them also.

The Apostles being very careful to fix the most extraordinary Persons in the Metropolitan Cities, where was the greatest Occasion for Men of the most eminent Gifts and Abilities; this caused the other Bishops of the Provinces to make their Application to them for

(f) Annot. ad Can. Apost. 34.

Advice upon the most important Affairs, and to pay a particular Deference and Respect to them upon all Occasions. So that, although all the Bishops constituted by the Apostles were of equal Authority as Bishops, and therefore when a new Bishop was to be chosen, they all met together to consecrate him, yet they still yielded a Precedency to the Bishop of the Metropolis, and so they did when they assembled to consult about any Affairs of the Church. This was found to be the most prudent and convenient Method to preserve the Unity of the Church in several Provinces. All Provincial Councils (and in those Ages there could be no other), always met in the Metropolis of that Province. And as they were then under the Jurisdiction of the Metropolitan, they considered him as the President or Moderator of the Session, to whom they paid a due Deference and Subjection. And, as it was necessary for the Bishops to meet frequently upon the Affairs of the Church in every Province, it was therefore necessary, that a Primacy should be granted to one of them, to summon and convene the rest.

I have been the longer upon this Article, because it tends to explain the primitive manner of electing Bishops into vacant Sees. Upon the Death of a Bishop, the comprovincial Bishops met together with their Metropolitan to elect a new one. This we learn from the Council of Nice, which had very carefully examined into the Practice of the most primitive Times, where it is decreed, *Can. 4.* That a Bishop ought chiefly to be constituted by all the Bishops of the Province; but if this be too difficult, either through urgent Occasions or the length of the way, yet *three* must be present for that Purpose, and have the Consent of the Absent under their Hands, and so to make the Consecration. But the Confirmation of all Things to be done in the Province must be referred to the Metropolitan. The Council of *Laodicea* about the same Time decrees, *Can. 12, 13.* That Bishops approved both in Faith and Doctrine should be constituted for the Government of the Church by the Metropolitans and neighbouring Bishops. Now though the Bishops had the undoubted Right to constitute other Bishops upon every Vacancy, yet the People

People were not entirely excluded, their Consent was generally asked, and they had the Privilege of making Exceptions to many Persons nominated for Election. The Resemblance of which is still kept up in the Ordinations and Consecrations used in the Church of England, tho' both here and there they are no otherwise considered than as Witnesses and not Judges, as the late learned Bishop *Stillingfleet* observes (a) Sometimes the Bishops permitted them to nominate and recommend a proper Person, and if they found him deserving, and duly qualified according to the ancient Canons, they elected him; if not, if they judged him unfit, they refused him. It seems indeed in some parts of History, as if the People commonly recommended some Persons to the Clergy, who chose one, and presented him to the Metropolitan and Bishops, whom they either consecrated or rejected, as they thought fit. But this was not a matter of Right, the People could by no means pretend to claim it; it was a mere prudential indulgence, that they might be the better pleased and satisfied with their new Bishop, as having given their own Consent and Approbation to the Election. But it is beyond all Dispute certain, that the Power of Election as well as Consecration, was entirely in the Bishops, as it was originally in the Apostles. As the Apostles decreed, and exercised such a Power independent of the People, so they conveyed the same to the individual Persons of their Successors. There are two remarkable Instances of this in the case of *Timothy* and *Titus*, to whom the Apostle gives particular Directions and Instructions with regard to their Ordination of Bishops in their several Provinces. The Commission to *Timothy* is directly referred to in these Words (b), *The things, which thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others*. The Substance of *Titus's* Commission is (c) *For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things, that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee*. In both these cases we find the entire Right and Power of electing and consecrating the

(a) Antiqu. Brit. Churches, p. 97. (b) 2 Tim. ii. 2. (c) Titus i. 5. Governors

Governors of the Church, that each of them in their single Persons are expressly specified and directed in the Charge and Execution of it. In the first it is plainly expressed, *Commit THOU, &c.*— In the second, and that *THOU shouldst ordain Elders, &c.*—as I had appointed *THEE*.

And as in the nature of things it was apparently necessary, that the Church, as a Society distinct from the State, should have a Power of electing its own Governors, which was incontestably the original Practice of the primitive Church; so it was equally necessary, that she should have a Power of convening these Governors upon any Emergency, for the more regular and convenient Exercise of her spiritual Authority, such as the Election of Bishops, the determining Controversies, censuring Hereticks and Schismatics, enacting Laws for the better Preservation of Decency and Uniformity, and the punishing obstinate and incorrigible Sinners. And this, as appears from History, was the constant Practice of the Catholick Church from the beginning. It cannot be imagined, that they would apply to the Heathen Governors for Leave to assemble upon proper Occasions to consult and provide for the Necessities of the Church, and the Maintenance of a Religion, which they hated and persecuted, and would for that Reason certainly have refused to comply with any Request or Petition of that Kind. But when the Emperors became Christian, it cannot be doubted, but that they promoted and encouraged upon all Occasions the Bishops meeting together in Councils, and protected and assisted them with the Civil Power, in the Discharge of every Branch of their Episcopal Duty; nor do I believe it can ever be made appear, that they at any Time attempted to forbid or prevent their Meeting, whenever they thought fit to assemble themselves. For, as they were always ready to convene them in General Councils, upon any notable Emergency, so they neither did nor could prevent the calling Provincial Synods, which by the 30th Apostolical Canon were appointed to be held regularly twice every Year, *viz.* the first on the 4th Week after *Easter*, and the second on the 12th Day of *October*, to determine all Doctrines

of

of Religion among themselves, and to put an end to all Ecclesiastical Controversies, that may happen. This was afterwards confirmed and enforced by the fifth Canon of the Council of *Nice*, and the twentieth Canon of the Council of *Antioch*, with this Addition, That the Metropolitan should summon the other Bishops, and that without a Metropolitan no Synod should be holden.

This appears to have been the constant and uniform Practice of the primitive Church in their Election of Bishops, and convening of Synods without any Interruption or Interposition of the secular Powers. The first Attempt, that we read of to subvert this original and natural Exercise of Ecclesiastical Power, was made by the Donatists, who appealed to the Emperor *Constantine* in an Ecclesiastical Cause, to decide a Dispute they had raised concerning the Election of *Cæcilian* into the See of *Carthage*. But this Godly Emperor, in a Letter to the Bishops of the Council of *Arles* (which is extant *inter Gesta purgationis Cæcilianii & Falicis in fine Optati, Edit. Paris*) refused to accept their Appeal, as not belonging to him, and owned, *that the Bishops were the only proper Judges of their own Order; for that he himself was to be subject to them.* He says it was the work of the Devil, and an outrageous daring Fury in these Donatists, whom therefore he calls * *Proditors*, to refuse to submit to the Judgment of their Bishops, which he calls the *Heavenly Judgment*, and says the Contempt of it is an Insult offered to God himself. He says, *It is as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, that God had ordained his Church only to judge in such Cases, and refused to be joined in Commission with them, as if he had any part in it. What Madness (says he) possesses them, that with incredible Arrogance, they think, they may do that, which cannot lawfully be either spoken or heard, and departing from the rightful Judgment, which God hath ordained, they require my Judgment together with that of the Church! What malignant Violence possesses them! How often have they been justly re-proved by my self for those wicked Additions to God's Word*

* Betrayers

in these Cases? For I declare (as the Truth is) that the Judgment of Priests ought to be accounted as the Judgment of God himself. So far was this pious Emperor from claiming any kind or degree of spiritual Jurisdiction over the Church, that he calls it an Addition to God's Word. As the Donatists were the first, who appealed to the civil Power from the Decisions of the Church in a matter of purely Ecclesiastical Cognizance; so the Eusebians did the same to Constantius the first Heretical Emperor, who made such Use of the Advantage they gave him, that he had well nigh overthrown the Christian Faith. But Athanasius and Hosius with great Zeal opposed and protested against this dangerous Innovation and Violation of the Rights of the Church, saying, that they who did appeal to Constantius in Ecclesiastical Matters, did set him up instead of Christ: That to make himself a Prince of Bishops, and to preside in Ecclesiastical Judicature made him the very same Abomination of Desolation, foretold by Daniel the Prophet (a) Do not (says Hosius, the aged Bishop of Corduba) concern thy self in Ecclesiastical Affairs, nor command us in these Matters: but rather learn these things of us. God hath given to thee the Empire, and he hath entrusted us with these things, that belong to the Church. And as he, that with malignant Eyes reproacheth thy Empire, opposeth the Ordinance of God: So do thou beware, lest drawing to thee those things, that belong to the Church, thou thereby fall into a heavy Condemnation. It is written, Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. It is not lawful for us, O Emperor, to invade thy Earthly Empire, neither hast thou the Power of holy things (b)

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(a) Athan. Ep. ad. Solitar. p. 861, 862.

(b) Athan. ibid. 639.

Ἰσα ἐαυτῷς ἂν τὸ δὴ τοῖς θείοις λόγοις ἀνταρμαίνουσι ὁ πόλεμος εἶναι προσήκει· τὸν ἀρχιερωσύνης ἡγεμονίαν· ὡς εὖ καὶ λόγος μόνος, ἀλλὰ καὶ βίβη· τοὺς ἀρχιερωσύνης ἀνταρμαίνειν, καὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς ἐαυτὸν ἀρχιερωσύνης ἐπιθεῖναι, καὶ μαρτυρεῖν τῆς διδασκαλίας τὴν πολυτέλειαν· τοιοῦτον δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ νῦν ἀρχιερατικοῖς ἐκκαθιδύσασθαι θέουσιν, ὅπως καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν βασιλείαν ἰθυσόντες, ἐκκαθιδύσασθαι αὐτῷ τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐποπτείας· ἀποφάλας, καὶ τοὺς παρ' ἐκείνων γενομένους ἐλεγχες, ἀνθρώπους γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπικρατεῖν ἀνάγκη ὡς ἱατρικὸν ἀσπασέμεθα θεραπεύειν. Theod. Lib. iv, C. 6.

The late Bishop *Burnet*, who was never suspected of Partiality to his own Episcopal Order, tells us in his History of the Regale, p. 30. That *Constantine* did absolutely renounce the Power of electing Bishops, of which he produces several Instances; that, writing to the Bishops assembled at *Antioch* for the Election of a Bishop, he leaves the Choice entirely to them, desiring them, that the Election may be made according to the Rule of the Church, and the Tradition of the Apostles p. 31. He takes notice of *Constantius* depriving the orthodox Bishops, and putting *Arians* in their rooms by his own Authority, and he quotes an Epistle of *Hilary* writing to these Court-Bishops; *O ye Bishops, I pray you what Suffrages did the Apostles make use of? did they receive their Dignity from the Palace?* But then he tells us afterwards, that this Precedent was not universally followed. Tho' some furious Emperors push'd hard, after the Example of *Constantius*, to enlarge their Prerogative, yet others refused it. He tells us, p. 37, 38. how the Emperor *Valentinian*, about the Year 347, upon the Death of *Alexentius* Bishop of *Milan*, who was an *Arian*, called the Bishops together, and desired them to *chuse such a Bishop, as might both by his Life and Doctrine instruct those, whom he was to govern, and that he might see such a Person set up, as that he, who held the Empire might chearfully submit himself to him.* This Speech of the Emperor's, as related by *Theodoret*, Lib. IV. Cap. 6. 7. is so very remarkable, that I cannot help giving it you entire in his own Words. Having convened the Bishops, he address'd himself to them in these Words, **You, who have been bred up in the study of the holy Scriptures, cannot be ignorant what*

The literal Signification of the Greek is this: Ye clearly know, as being well educated in those Things contained in the Holy Discourses, what manner of Man it becomes him to be, who is esteemed worthy of sacred Government, and he ought not only by preaching alone, but by his Life also to inform those governed by him, and to propose himself a Pattern of all Virtue, and render his Conversation (or Practice,) the Test of his Doctrine. Do ye therefore now especially place just such a Person on the Chief-Sacred Seat, that even we at the same time exercising kingly Sway, may sincerely bow our Heads to him, and by him standing reprov'd, who, as being Men, must of Necessity fall, may embrace his healing Ministry.

* N. B. The Greek in the two preceding Pages belongs to this Passage of *Theodoret*.

Qualifications are required in a good Bishop, that he ought to instruct the People committed to his Charge not only by his Preaching, but by his Life and Conversation, that he ought to propose his own Example as the Pattern of all Virtues, and the Sanctity of his Life as the truest Proof of the Soundness of his Doctrine. See therefore that ye place such a Man in the Episcopal Chair, that we, who have the supreme temporal Authority, may sincerely and heartily obey him, and receive his Reproofs as a wholesome Remedy for those Faults, into which through human Frailty we shall sometimes unavoidably fall.

The Bishop after this proceeds to give several Instances of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, who purely out of Conscience renounced all Pretensions to Ecclesiastical Power, although conveyed down to them with the Temporal from their Ancestors. He tells us, p. 93. That the Emperor *John Comnenus* about the Year of Christ 1130, condemned the Exercise of the Civil Power in the Election of Bishops, and mentions a severe Law, which *Manuel Comnenus* made against it, in which he calls it a *wicked Custom*. Again, p. 97, 98. a later Instance is given in the 14th Century of *John Catacuzenus* the Emperor, and Part of the Speech is set down, which he made to the Bishops, who were met for the Election of a Patriarch. He told them they ought to follow the Steps of the Apostles and Fathers, who being met together invoked the Holy Ghost, and implored the Grace of God to direct them in the Choice of one, that should govern the Church according to his Will. He acknowledged, that in Elections great Errors had been committed, which Men were apt to excuse as they did all their other Sins, that were dear to them; for it was certainly a mocking God, first to resolve, who shall be Patriarch, and then to meet, and hypocritically pray for the Divine Direction and Assistance. This he confessed he had done himself, and he did not doubt, but his Predecessors had done the same; wherefore he ingenuously confessed his Sin, and declared, that he would never be guilty of it more. Then in *France* he tells us, p. 190, 191. that when Pope *Lucius* the second, to court the Favour of *Lewis* the seventh about the Year 1148, sent him a Bull

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Bull with a Privilege, that in all his Cathedrals *he should dispose of the first Vacancy, and enjoy the mean Profits*; he burnt the Bull, and said *he would rather burn 10,000 such Grants, than have his Soul tormented in Hell-fire.* And p. 209. he tells us, that *Alphonsus, Count de Toulouse*, did about the Year 1138, not only renounce, but condemn the Exercise of Temporal Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, which his Predecessors had enjoined in his Dominions, and calls it *that most wicked Custom of his Ancestors*; by which they seized violently on the Goods of the deceased Bishops. One Branch of the Royal Power was the Presentation to Bishopricks and other Church Dignities. The other was the seizing the Revenues during the Vacancy, and this was a Temptation to keep them long vacant. And both these Branches of Power were condemned and given up by these and several other religious Princes, as an Usurpation upon the Kingdom of Christ, although some of their Successors took it up afterwards, as they were otherwise inclined.

I hope it pretty plainly appears, what Sort and Degree of Power the Church was originally invested with, considered as a Spiritual Society distinct from the Civil: And what the uniform Practice of the ancient Church was in these two great Branches of Power in every Society, that of electing their own Governors, and enacting and executing their own Laws, for the better Direction and Security of the Whole, and answering the several important Ends of their Institution. And that the *British Church* was formed by the same Model, as a Member of the same Catholick Church, that she enjoyed the same Privileges, and exercised the same Authority, cannot (we presume) be denied or disputed. That she was first founded by *St. Paul* himself, the learned Bishop *Stillingfleet* (a) thinks highly probable. And she was acknowledged and recognized by *Tertullian* (b) and (c) *Origen*. And at the Council of *Arles*, Anno 314, we find three *British Bishops* subscribing it, *Eborius* Bishop of *York*, *Restitutus* Bishop of *London*,

(a) Antiq. Brit, chap. 1.

(b) Contra Judæos, c. 7.

(c) In Ezek. Hom. 4.

and

and *Adelphius de Civitate Coloniae Londinensium*; but what Place that was the Learned are not agreed. But it seems as if there were at that Time three Provinces in *Britain*, every one of which sent a Bishop to this Council; so that upon the Whole, one would imagine, that there had been an uninterrupted Succession of Bishops in the *British* Church from the Apostolical Times. As it was certain they sat in the Council of *Arles*, so it is more than probable they sat also in the Council of *Nice*, upon many Considerations collected by the above-mentioned learned Writer (*d*); from whence we may be sufficiently enabled to judge, what was the Sense and Practice of the *British* Church at that Time, concerning their spiritual Privileges and Immunities. The Bishops there assembled made twenty Canons for the Government and Discipline of the Church, in which they partly reinforced the Canons of the Council of *Arles*, and added some new ones, in which were particularly settled the two grand Points of ecclesiastical Polity. 1. The Election and Consecration of Bishops. And 2. The calling Provincial Synods. The former is expressly declared in the fourth Canon, which I have already quoted, *That a Bishop ought to be constituted by all the Bishops of the Province, &c.* — By this Canon the Government of the Church was now settled under the Protection, and with the Approbation of, the Emperor *Constantine*. The only Difficulty lies in this first Clause, What is meant by *the Bishops of the Province constituting a new Bishop*; whether the Right of Election is hereby devolved upon them, or only the Right of Consecration upon the Election of the Prince, or People, or both. Which is therefore fit to be enquired into, because the ancient Practice of the *British* Church may be fully known, which we may justly presume was agreeable to the *Nicene* Canon, which themselves had signed as binding to themselves and their Principals. And because the Signification of the *Greek* Word is ambiguous, we must see what Sense the

Greek

(*d*) *Antiq. Brit.* c. 3.

Greek Writers put upon it. *Balsamon* interprets *ναδικαοθαί* by *ἐκδικαοθαί*, which signifies to choose by Suffrage or Ballot; and he plainly affirms, that by this Canon the Right of Election is taken from the People, and given to the Bishops of the Province. *Zonaras* and *Blastares* are of the same Opinion. It cannot be denied, that the People had the Privilege of proposing and recommending Persons to be chosen, and of offering their Exceptions against any Persons, whom on canonical Grounds they judged to be undeserving; but all this was ultimately referred, to the Bishops and Metropolitan, who were to judge of the Merits of the Persons, and to elect, or refuse accordingly. If their Exceptions were just and well proved, the Bishops, as Judges, were to proceed canonically against them, and then they went to a new Nomination; but still the Judgment rested in the Provincial Synod. So in the sixteenth Canon of the Council of *Antioch* it is provided, that, tho' all the People chose one actually a Bishop, yet if he takes possession of his See, without a perfect Provincial Synod, the Metropolitan being present, he is to be cast out. But in no Synodical Act or Canon doth it appear, that the Prince had any Right to elect or constitute a Bishop by virtue of his own Royal Authority. The second Branch of Ecclesiastical Power, the calling Provincial Synods, was also fully settled in this Council, and the Apostolical Canon fully confirmed, viz. that Provincial Synods be held twice a Year, in Lent and Autumn. Which we may therefore fairly conclude was the constant Practice of the *British*, as well as other Christian Churches.

And now I expect to be asked, if this were the original Institution, confirmed by innumerable Canons, and the uniform Practice of the whole Christian Church, how came it to be violated? Who first dared to invade these inherent Privileges of this spiritual Society? By what Artifice or Violence were they wrested from them? and by what Steps were those Encroachments made, of which (you know I speak for my Clients) they too justly complain?—Fair and softly! good Sir, we are got among the Briars, which must be handled very gently, for fear of pricking our Fingers----

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The first Step towards it seems to have been an excessive Complaisance in the Governors of the Church to the first Christian Emperors. The just Sense they had of their happy Deliverance from a State of Persecution, under which they had groaned for three hundred Years, naturally threw them into Transports of Gratitude and Joy ; and as they found their great Deliverer and Protector most zealously attached to the Interests of Religion, and the Security and Honour of the Church, they thought they could never shew too much Regard for him, who had shewn so much for them, which is certainly right. Yet through the Weakness of human Nature, the excessive Veneration, which the Bishops paid to their Heroick Patron and Religious Defender, whom they ought rather to have considered only as an Instrument in the Hands of GOD for their Deliverance, seems to have made some Impressions of Vanity upon his Mind, insomuch that even before he himself was a Catechumen, he took upon him to write to the Bishops with an Air of Authority, and the Language of Instruction. Which *Eusebius* in his Life takes notice of: *Even to my self* (says he) *the Writer of this History* (a) *he sent a very learned Preachment.* Upon which Passage *Valesius* in his Annotations (b) makes this Remark, *That this Emperor, tho' not yet a Catechumen, wrote in a Language more becoming a Bishop or Doctor of the Church. He was certainly a Prince divinely enlightned, and commissioned by God for the Propagation of the Christian Faith, to whom the Christian Church is more indebted, than to any one particular Person since the Days of the Apostles. But yet in Ecclesiastical Affairs he took more upon him, than became any Layman, tho' a Prince ; the Bishops in a manner leaving every thing* to

(b) In his omnibus [epistolis] Constantinus tametsi adhuc vix Catechumenus, Doctorem agit. Fuit certè Constantinus, quod negari non potest, Vir Deo plenus & a Deo missus ad Christianæ fidei propagationem, cui uni post Apostolos plurimum debemus. Idem tamen in negotiis Ecclesiasticis, aliquanto plus sibi vindicavit, quam laico principi conveniret : Episcopis curata illi permittentibus, multumque sibi gratulantibus, quod Christianum Imperatorem viderent. *Vales. Annot. de Vitâ Constantini, Lib. 3. c. 51.*

to his Direction, for Joy, that they were under the Protection of a Christian Emperor. And tho' it is very certain that he employed all his Power for the Interest and Security of the Church and Christian Religion, as appears particularly in his summoning the Council of Nice, in the providing all Necessaries for the convenient Carriage and Maintenance of the several Bishops, who were to attend it, and the constant and reverend Attendance he himself paid during the whole Session : Yet was this an unlucky Precedent for his Son and Successor *Constantius*, who expected the same Deference from the Bishops to his Imperial Authority, which had on quite other grounds been paid to his Father. This Power he grossly abused, by calling several Synods of *Arian* Bishops to destroy the Orthodox Faith, and banishing those, who had the Courage to maintain and defend it. Their Successors in the Empire took Care never to drop their Pretences to Ecclesiastical Authority. Orthodox Princes, who had no other view but the protecting the Catholick Faith and its true Professors, and made no other use of their Power, were hardly thought to exceed the Bounds of their civil Authority, so long as they never pretended to exercise, or claim any Authority purely spiritual : But when an Infidel, an Heretick, or Apostate got into the Throne, they made use of the same Power to distress the Church, which the Orthodox and Religious had employed to protect and defend it. Yet in the heighth of their Malignity, we believe it hard to produce an Instance of any Emperor, pretending to the sole Nomination of a Bishop by his own Authority, tho' they might influence the Clergy or People in favour of their Creatures and Favourites, which occasioned many Canons to be made to discourage, and prevent it. And what could they do more to shew the Sense and Practice of the Church upon those Occasions ? Any other Opposition to the Will of an arbitrary Prince, unawed by Religion, would have been fruitless and dangerous, and indeed was morally impossible ; for without all doubt they got the vacant Sees filled with such Creatures, as they knew to be entirely at their disposal ; Men, that should never murmur at the Hand, that raised them,

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nor offer to oppose the Will and Pleasure of their Sovereign. Nothing therefore can be argued from the Silence and Compliances of these obsequious Gentlemen; this could be no Proof of the Sense and Practice of the Church. So far from it, that, besides the Reasons from the Nature of the Thing, besides the Evidence of History, and the Sentiments of particular Fathers in every Age, (a) there are several Canons upon Record, made even by general Councils as well as others, that plainly and fully assert and confirm these Immunities of the Church, and her independent Authority in this Point: In many of which it is made *Excommunication* and *Deprivation* to appeal from the Bishop to the King or any secular Power in Ecclesiastical Cases: Or for any Bishop to be made, not only by the King's Command, but if he make use of the Interest or Recommendation of temporal Princes to obtain his Bishoprick by their means: And that all Elections of Bishops, Presbyters or Deacons by the secular Magistrate shall be void. And the Method of their Election is set down, viz. Of Presbyters and Deacons by the Bishop, and of the Bishop by the Comprovincial Bishops. And that this was the Practice of the ancient *British* Church, is hardly to be doubted; of which we have many remarkable Proofs in Sir *Harry Spelman's History of the English Councils*.

But that, which most of all contributed to the Subversion of these original Rights and Immunities, were the Papal Usurpations, under the Mask of a pretended Zeal for their Defence and Protection. The Primacy, which, by the Constitution of the western Church, had been affixed to the *Roman See*, for the better Correspondence and Management of Jurisdiction in the Episcopal College, was by degrees improved into a Claim of universal and unlimited Supremacy; and that too *Jure divino* over all his Collegues, over all the Bishops of the Catholick Church. This was set up in the
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(a) Can. Apost. 30. 31. 1 Council of Nice, c. 4. Constant, 2d Gen. Coun. Can. 6. Chalced. 4th Gen. Coun. c. 9. 2d Coun. Nice, c. 3. Constant. 8th Gen. Coun. c. 22. Coun. of Eliberis, c. 56.

sixth Century by John Bishop of Constantinople; who, when the Seat of the Empire was translated thither, assumed the Title of *Oecumenical Bishop*, or *Universal Patriarch*, which was severely condemned by Gregory the Great; as may be seen at large in his Book of *Epistles* (a). He calls it a *new Doctrine*, that had never been heard at Rome, and an *Authority*, which none of her Bishops had pretended to claim; that it was against the *Doctrine of the Gospel*, against the *Decrees of Canons*, against the *Right of all other Bishops*, and all other Churches, with many other Things to the same Purpose, and many excellent Reasons given for it, agreeable to the Sentiments of the Church in all Ages. Agreeable to which is the Declaration of St. Cyprian; (b) *Therefore the Episcopal College is large, and there are many Bishops joined together in the Bond of Unity, that, if any Bishop of the College should propagate Heresy, and so seek to tear and waste the Flock of Christ, the rest might mercifully interpose for the saving of the Flock, and gather again the Sheep of the Lord into the Fold: for though we are many Pastors, yet we all feed the same Flock.* And again (says he) (c) *As there is but one Church through the whole World, divided into many Members: so there is but one Episcopate diffused through the numerous Agreement of many Bishops.* Among these in the western Church, the Bishop of Rome, as the Metropolis of the Empire, held the first Place, and therefore Applications were made principally to him in the Affairs of the Church. But for any such universal Supremacy as is now pretended, as if he were the ultimate and infallible Judge of Controversy, it was totally unknown to those early Ages; in which, altho' there

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(a) Lib. 4. Ep. 32, 33, 34, 36, 38. Lib. 6. Ep. 24, 28, 30, 39, &c.

(b) Idcirco, (Frater charissime) copiosum corpus est sacerdotum, concordia mutuae glutine copulatum, ut si quis ex Collegio nostro Hæresin facere, & gregem Christi lacerare & vastare tentaverit, subveniant ceteri, & quasi pastores utiles & misericordes oves dominicas in gregem colligant. (c) infra Nam et si pastores multi sumus, unum tamen gregem pascimus. Ep. 68. p. 178.

(c) Cum sit a Christo una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa; item Episcopatus unus Episcoporum multorum concordia numerum diffusus. Ep. 55. p. 112. Ed. Oxon.

there were many and great Controversies, yet no such Appeal to the Bishop of *Rome* is to be found in the History of those Times: And as it would (if believed) be the most summary Way of deciding Controversies, there is no doubt, but we should have met with it upon many Occasions, where such Decisions would have been thought necessary. However it came to pass, the Bishops of *Rome* did at last, by the most refined Policy, get themselves to be acknowledged as universal Bishops of the western Church; but finding they could not maintain their Usurpations over all the Bishops in the World, which they also claimed, without the Assistance of the temporal Powers, they were content to divide the Spoil between them: they graciously vouchsafed to give them the Nomination of some Bishops, and the Disposal of the Revenue of some Churches during the Vacancies, and some Peculiars exempt from the Jurisdiction of the Bishops, that they might defend and maintain the Papal Usurpations over the rest; both Sides erecting and enlarging their pretended Claims upon the Ruins of primitive Episcopacy. To secure this Point more effectually, *Grotius* tells us, (d) that Pope *Adrian I.* gave *Charles the Great* a Power to chuse and invest with the Ring and pastoral Staff, (the Ensigns and Tokens of Episcopal Dignity) the Archbishops and Bishops in all the Provinces of his Empire, and that no Bishop should be consecrated, that was not first invested by him. Tho' this Decree or Grant of Pope *Adrian* be generally esteemed by learned Men to be a Forgery, as being not mentioned by any Ecclesiastical Historian (as it certainly would have been) till about the twelfth Century, near four hundred Years after it was said to be made; yet it is undeniable, that this Custom did prevail through *France*, *Germany*, and *Italy*, *Spain*, *Hungary*, and *Britain*, and the whole *Latin* World; so that for three hundred Years together, the *Roman* Emperors chose all the Bishops, Abbots, Deans, and Prebends in their Dominions, but upon a quite different Account than this pretended Papal Decree. For all the great Dignities

(d) De Imp. & sum. potest. cir. Sacra. C. 20. §. 24.

Dignities were possessed of Lay-Fees, and Fees or Temporalities granted by the Piety of former Princes, for the better Support of their Dignity and Character. But such was the Nature of these Fiefs, that, except they were made Hereditary, which Ecclesiastical Fiefs never could be, upon the Death of any Feudatory, the Sovereign entered upon, and took possession of the Fief, till he thought convenient to bestow it upon some other Person; and this was, what the several Princes in their Disputes with the Popes about this Matter always insisted upon, without acknowledging any Right or Grant from the Papal See for so doing. So then upon the Death of any Bishop, the Lay-fees or Temporalities fell of course into the hands of the chief Lord, who had a Power to make a new Grant to whatever Person he pleased; and to enjoy all the mean Profits arising from them, till such Grant was made. Wherefore, though by the Custom and Canons of the Church, the Election of a Bishop belonged to the Clergy and People, together with the Metropolitan and Comprovincial Bishops; yet it was at the Pleasure of the Prince, whether the new Elect should enjoy the Temporalities of the Bishoprick or not, because they reverted to his full Possession upon the Death of the former Bishop. Upon which account, no doubt, the Electors were willing to quit their Right of Election to the Prince, on whose Favour alone the decent Maintenance and Support of his Dignity depended; or at least to elect the Person, whom he should nominate and invest; well knowing, that few Persons would be willing to undertake the Episcopal Burthen, if there were no Revenues to support it. By which means it came to pass, after the Introduction of the feudal Tenure by the *Goths* and *Vandals*, it became a general Custom for all Sovereign Princes in the Western Churches, to invest whom they pleased with the Temporalities of vacant Bishopricks; and the Person so invested was consecrated by the Metropolitan and Provincial Bishops. This continued in the Church of *Rome* above three hundred Years; till Pope *Hildebrand* set himself to oppose it, and others after him, and have brought it to the State, in which

we now see it. The Consequences of this Method of *Investiture* were very fatal to Religion ; for Princes, especially the Politick and Irreligious (and some such, no doubt, there were) little regarded the Virtues and real Merits of those, whom they preferred to the highest Stations. If a Clergy-man had any Dependence on the Prince, or some great Minister of State, so that he could do them service in their political Schemes and temporal Affairs, this certainly advanced him to a good Bishoprick, without considering whether he were in any degree qualified for so sacred and important an Office. So that Learning, Piety, Virtue, and Diligence in performing the Duties of their holy Function, seldom recommended any one to Preferment : But whoever had any hope of obtaining a Bishoprick, applied himself rather to make his Court to the Prince, by Attendance and Dependence upon great Men rather than by his Learning, Piety, or faithful Discharge of his pastoral Duty ; from whence sprung, in a great Measure, that Ignorance, Barbarism, and other strange Corruptions, under which the Church so long groaned before the Reformation. This occasioned many sharp Contests between Popes and Princes, with various Success and different Consequences in different Countries, and they were forced to make different Agreements, Compromises, Concordats, about the dividing the Ecclesiastical Spoil ; so that there was hardly in any one of the western Churches an uniform Method of supplying the vacant Churches. But the Pope had generally the Cunning to reserve the best Share to himself ; which ended in an intolerable Tyranny and Usurpation, which, after many Struggles and Contentions in the several national Churches, too well known, and too tedious to be mentioned, gave a Handle to King *Henry VIII.* to give the finishing Stroke to the Papal Authority here in *England*, in which we are chiefly concerned. Upon throwing off the Papal Authority, instead of restoring to the Episcopal College their original, inherent Privileges, of which they had been unjustly deprived by the Bishop of *Rome* ; the King seized to himself all that Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Matters, that the Pope had

had unjustly claimed as the supreme Bishop or Vicar under Christ himself. To which they were compelled to consent by an *Act of Submission*; which has reduced them to a lower Degree of Subjection and Dependence, than the most inconsiderate Corporation in this City: *The worshipful Companies of Pinnmakers and Watermen* have the Privilege of chusing their own Masters and Wardens, of meeting in their common Hall, of making and enacting such By-Laws (not contrary to the Laws of the Realm) as shall be thought proper for the better Government of their respective Societies, and of punishing by Mulcts or Fines, or civil Incapacities, such of their Members, as shall act in opposition to the Authority of their proper Governors, and the Laws of the Community. But the *English* Clergy, considered as a Body Corporate, have not the least Shadow of Power in the Choice of their Bishops, unless you please to except the Power of consecrating the Man, whom the King shall chuse: *i. e. Hobson's Choice*, which, they dare as well eat Fire, as refuse: Nor dare they meet in Convocation without the Royal Mandate, under the pain of a Premunire.

A Stranger to the History of *England* would think it incredible, that a Point of such Consequence could be carried without any Difficulty; that the Body of the *English* Clergy, which were at that Time very considerable, on account of their Interest and Riches, and by no Means inconsiderable for Learning, as the State of Learning was at that Time, should so easily agree to strip themselves of all Ecclesiastical Power, and submit themselves and their Successors to the Authority of Temporal Powers: But we, who knew the Temper of that Prince, can easily account for his successful Management of that Affair. He had a particular kind of Logic to convince, as of Rhetorick to persuade those, who had not good Sense enough to believe their Sovereign always in the right. Of which Sir *Harry Spelman* gives us a notable Instance in the Act for suppressing Monasteries and religious Houses under such a value. (f) 'It is true, said he, the Parliament did give
' them

(f) History of Sacrilege, p. 183.

' them to him, but so unwillingly (as I have heard)
 ' that, when the Bill had stuck long in the Lower
 ' House, and could get no Passage, he commanded the
 ' Commons to attend him in the Forenoon, in his Gal-
 ' lery, where he let them wait till late in the Afternoon,
 ' and then coming out of his Chamber, and taking a
 ' turn or two among them, and looking angrily on
 ' them, first on one side and then on the other; at
 ' last,——*I hear (said he) that my Bill will not pass;*
 ' *but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your*
 ' *Heads.*——And without any other Rhetorick or
 ' Persuasion returned to his Chamber.'——Any other
 Rhetorick!——What other Rhetorick could be ex-
 pected? This was Rhetorick and Logick too with a
 Vengeance: their Eyes were immediately opened,
 and their Understandings convinced, that his Ma-
 jesty's Commands were highly reasonable; and there-
 fore they immediately passed the Bill, and gave him all,
 that his Soul desired. And there is no doubt to be made,
 but that the Act of Submission was obtained by the
 same engaging Methods of Conviction and Persuasion.
 The Province of *Canterbury* complied immediately,
 they were under the immediate Inspection and Rod of
 the Court: But the Province of *York* stood out for some
 Time, and drew up their Reasons for so doing (a Copy
 of which I have seen.) Their Situation was at so great
 a Distance from the Court, that they thought they
 might have time to parley, and debate with their Go-
 vernors, without any immediate Apprehensions of Royal
 Vengeance; but they found themselves mistaken, and
 were quickly made to understand, that it would be
 their wisest Way to be as complaisant as their Bre-
 thren of *Canterbury* had been, and accordingly with-
 out any more ado (as Bishop *Burnet* tells us (a) they
 acknowledged the King as *Supreme Head of the*
Church, and sole Fountain of all Ecclesiastical Power.

The King, in order to terrify the Clergy into
 this Act of Submission, had revived some obsolete Sta-
 tutes,

(a) Hist. Reform. Book II. p. 113.

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tutes, by which the whole Body of the Clergy were sued in a *Præmunire*, for having acknowledged a foreign Jurisdiction, and taken out Bulls, and had Suits in the Legatine Courts, contrary to the Laws of *England*. The Kings of *England* did claim in their turn, as well as the Popes, more Power in Ecclesiastical Matters than by the original Constitution and uniform Practice and Consent of the primitive Church did properly belong to them, and these Claims and Demands on both sides rose, and fell in proportion to the Power and Ability, that each had to support and defend them; so that by Consequence, many extraordinary Steps were taken on both Sides, which on Christian and Catholic Principles can never be defended, and therefore ought never to be drawn into Precedents upon other Occasions. Our Kings had formerly, as Bishop Burnet says, (a) by their own Authority granted Investitures, (which is certainly true) and made Laws relating to Ecclesiastical Matters, Causes and Persons. But this he says without Proof or Probability; and I believe it would be hard to produce any such Law in Matters purely spiritual, I mean relating to the Doctrine or Discipline of the Church, made by the King's sole Authority, otherwise than by confirming, and enacting into a Law by the civil Authority, the Judgment and Decisions of the Bishops, passed in their Diocesan or provincial Synods. For, however binding the Decisions of the Church might be to Conscience, yet had they not the Force and Nature of Laws, until confirmed by the Royal Authority, and enforced by temporal Sanctions. However, when the Popes began to extend their Authority beyond the Limits assigned by the Canons, they met with great Opposition in *England* both in the Matter of Investitures, Appeals, Legates, and other Branches of their Usurpation. Upon which many Laws were passed, to condemn these Abuses, and restrain the several Invasions of the Royal Prerogative. In the 25 *Edw. III.* a severe Law was made, that all that transgressed were to be imprisoned, to be fined at Pleasure,

(a) Hist. Reform. Book II, p. 113.

sure, and to forfeit all their Benefices. By a subsequent Act they are put out of the King's Protection. Several other Confirmations of this were made in this Reign, and under *Richard II.* And the former Punishments were extended not only to the Provisors, but to all, that were employed by them, or took Farms of them. And in the sixteenth Year of this *Rich. II.* a Law was made, that if any purchased Translations, Excommunications or Bulls from *Rome*, that were contrary to the King or his Crown, they and all, that brought them over, or that received and executed them, were declared to be out of the King's Protection, and that their Goods and Chattels should be forfeited to the King, and their Persons imprisoned; and because the Proceedings upon this were by a Writ, called from the most material Words in it *Pramunire facias*; this Statute carried the Name of the Statute of *Pramunire*. Several Laws to the same effect were made in the Reigns of *Hen. IV.* and *Hen. V.* These Statutes, which in spite of all the Opposition made by the Court of *Rome*, and all their Endeavours to get them repealed, stood in full Force, were now called forth to execute the King's great Design of destroying every Power, that stood in opposition to his dearly beloved Supremacy. Under these Terrors the Clergy of the Province of *Canterbury* made their Submission; and in their Address to the King, he was called the *Protector and supreme Head of the Church of England*; but some excepting to that, it was added, *in so far as it is agreeable to the Law of Christ*. This was signed by nine Bishops, fifty Abbots and Priors, and the greatest Part of the lower House. And tho', as I observed before, the Convocation of *York* stood out upon account of the Words *Head of the Church*, which they said could belong to none but Christ himself; yet they were quickly convinced by a Letter of Expostulation from the King himself, that it was a dangerous thing for them to pretend to be wiser than their Betters; and they accordingly made their Submission, which was the more welcome, because with it they paid the Sum of 18,840 *l.* for his Majesty's Pardon and Protection, which was accordingly granted. The immediate

mediate Consequence of his Submission was the King's Claim to fill up all vacant Sees by his own single Authority, and forbidding the Clergy to meet, and act in a Synodical Way, without a Royal Mandate, under the Pain of a *Præmunire*.

(b) King *John*, in the 16th Year of his Reign 1215, with the common Consent of his Barons, granted a Charter, "That all Cathedral Churches and Convents should be free in the Election of their Prelates, saving to himself and his Heirs the Custody of vacant Churches and Monasteries, and that he will not hinder them any manner of Ways from choosing a new Pastor upon a Vacancy, provided that they first crave Leave of him and his Heirs to proceed to an Election (from whence came the Use of the *Congé d'elire*) which he promises he will not deny or defer: and if it be denied or deferred, that then the Electors may nevertheless proceed to a Canonical Election." But after the Election, his Approbation must be asked, which he also promises shall not be denied, without good Reason alledged and proved. This Charter was afterwards confirmed by *Magna Charta*, and many succeeding Parliaments. By the Tenour of this Charter, the Chapter was not obliged absolutely to choose the Person, whom the King should nominate, or recommend to them, nor yet the King to approve the Election made by them. This occasioned divers Controversies between the King and the Church, which caused frequent Appeals to *Rome*, which was still looked upon as the *Dernier Resort* in all such Controversies, as appears from the Election of an Archbishop in the room of *Stephen Langton*, and of a Bishop of *Winchester* upon the Death of *Peter de Rupibus* (c), and divers other Instances of the like nature. And in some Cases, where the King and Chapter had no Difference, the Pope would either annul the Election, or else take no Notice at all of it, and confer the Bishoprick on the same Person by his own Authority, and this he called *providing for the Church*. So that for some Ages we had

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(b) Mat. Paris, p. 921. (c) Mat. Par. 350, 372.

few Bishops, that did not possess their Sees by virtue of these Papal Provisions, notwithstanding the many repeated Statutes against this intolerable Usurpation. But King *Henry VIII.* made short Work, and cut the Knot at once, An Act of Parliament passed in the 25th Year of his Reign, that at every Avoidance of an Archbishoprick or Bishoprick within this Realm, or any other of the King's Dominions, the King may send to the Prior and Convent, or Dean and Chapter of the Place, which shall be void, a Licence under the great Seal to proceed to an Election of an Archbishop or Bishop of the See so being void, with a Letter missive with the Name of the Person, whom they shall elect and choose, which Person they are to elect and choose, and no other. And in case they defer the Election above twelve Days after the Receipt of the said Licence and Letters missive, then the King shall nominate by his Letters Patent such a Person to the said Office and Dignity, as he shall think able and convenient for the same. And the King shall appoint the Archbishop with two other Bishops; and if there be no Archbishop, then four Bishops, to consecrate and invest the Person so nominated and elected. And if the Prior and Convent, or Dean and Chapter, proceed not to Election within the Time limited, or neglect to certify the Archbishop of the Election, if it be a Bishop, or the King if it be an Archbishop, within twenty Days after the Receipt of the King's Licence, or if any Archbishop or Bishop shall refuse to consecrate the Person so elected or nominated, after such Election or Nomination is signified to them by the King's Letters Patent, or if any of them or any other Person sue, procure or obtain any Bulls, Letters, or other Things from the See of *Rome* upon that Occasion, or do any Thing contrary to this Act, he shall incur the Dangers, Pains and Penalties of the *Statute of Provision and Pre-munire* made in the 25th Year of King *Edward III.*

In the Reign of *Edward VI.* some Persons, who instead of paring the Nails of the Clergy were for cutting off their Arms to prevent their doing Mischief, procured a new Act, entitled, *An Act for Election, and what Seals and Styles shall be used by spiritual Persons; which*

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which passed *Nem. Con.* to this Effect, That the *Congregation*, and the Election pursuant to it, being but a Shadow, since the Person was named by the King, should cease for the future, and that Bishops should be named by the King's Letters Patent, and thereupon should be consecrated, and should hold their Courts in the King's Name, and not in their own, excepting only the Archbishop of *Canterbury's* Court, and they were to use the King's Seal in all their Writings, except Presentations, Collations and Letters of Orders, in which they might use their own Seals. The Contrivers of this Act, it is plain, designed nothing less than the entire Destruction of the Episcopal Authority, by making them nothing more than the King's Ministers, a sort of Ecclesiastical Sheriffs, to execute the King's Will, and disperse his Mandates; insomuch that they had not the Power of conferring Orders, but as they were thereunto empowered by special Licence. I have been shewn a Copy of such a Licence, but of what Authority I cannot tell. *The King to—greeting. Whereas all and all manner of Jurisdiction, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, flows from the King, as well as from the supreme Head of all the Body, &c.—We therefore give and grant to thee full Power and Licence to continue during our good Pleasure, for holding Ordination within thy Diocese of N—and for promoting fit Persons unto Holy Orders, even to that of the Priesthood.* Whether this be genuine, I know not. Bishop *Burnet*, who mentions the preceding Act, takes no notice of this new Regulation, only says in general, that the Office of Ordination was altered, without entering into the particular Alterations. These Changes being thought by *Queen Mary* not only a dangerous Diminution of the Episcopal Power, but an odious Innovation in the Church of Christ, were repealed in the first Year of her Reign, leaving the Bishops to depend upon their former Claim; and to act in all Things, that belong to their Jurisdiction, in their own Names, and under their own Seals as in former Times; in which State they have continued from that time to this, without any legal Interruption.

Many Attempts have been made, and Proposals and Reasons offered for reducing the present Power of the

Episcopate, as being yet too high: but surely they need no greater Restrictions than they are under already by the abovemention'd Act of *Henry VIII*, with regard to Elections. For the Dean and Chapter are allowed to make no manner of Exceptions to the Person nominated by the King, but must necessarily elect him within the time limited: Neither may the Archbishop or Bishops make any manner of Objection against him, but are obliged to proceed to Consecration, Nay, they are not permitted to delay this a few Days, that they may with all humble Submission represent the Unfitness of the Person, recommended to the highest Office of the Church, under the Penalty of a *Premunire*.

Having thus far considered the several Steps by which this Act of Submission was obtained; let us consider a little, who they were, that signed it, and how far their Successors the reformed Clergy of the Church of *England* ought, in Equity and Conscience, to be obliged or affected by it. The Convocation who signed it were Popish Clergy, who had really incurred the lash of a *Premunire*, as the Letter of the Law then stood; and well knowing the Temper of their Monarch, and having no inclination to Martyrdom, thought it their wisest Way to make the best Composition they could for their Lives and Liberties. And the Act of Supremacy was grounded upon it. For they had in both Convocations of the twenty-second and twenty-fifth of *Henry VIII* acknowledged him to be the supreme Head of the Church within his own Dominions; and, in consequence of these extraordinary Steps Bishop *Bauer* took out a Commission for his Bishoprick: as Archbishop *Cranmer* did afterwards in *Edward VI*'s Time; a Copy of which is inserted in Bishop *Burnet*'s History of the Reformation (*d*): whereby they held their Bishopricks during the Pleasure of the King, and owned to derive all their Power, even Ecclesiastical from the Crown, (*e*) *Velut a suprema capite, & omnium infra reg-*

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(*d*) *Burnet's Hist. Reform.* p. 2. Collect. Record. to Book I. n. 2. p. 90.

(*e*) As from the Supreme Head, and the Fountain and Spring of all civil Offices within our Realm.

num nostrum magistratum fante & scaturigine. And several others did the same. But how could any Acts of this Nature be binding to their Successors! The Clergy of the Church of *England*, a single Member of the Catholick Church, could, neither for themselves nor their Successors, give up those inherent Rights, which were derived to them from their Head, as essential to the whole Body, and could no more make a new Head, than they could make a new Body. Whatever ambitious Views the King might have in getting these Acts passed, (for his Vanity was equal to his Cruelty) and when those about him came to reflect in cool Blood upon the Inconsistencies and Absurdities of these Proceedings, they were ashamed of them, and by After-Explanations and Concessions, endeavoured to soften the apparent Hardship, which was thereby laid upon the Clergy; which I believe our first Reformers in the height of their Zeal against Popery never intended. Thus in the Commission, which *Cranmer* took for his Archbishoprick, there is an Exception, *Præter & ultra ea quæ tibi ex sacris literis divinitus commissa esse dignoscuntur*, i. e. *Over and above those Powers and Authorities, which the Holy Scriptures testify, are given to thee by God.* These the King did not pretend to grant, but only that, which was over and above these; that is, the Protection and civil Privileges annexed to their Office by the State. The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction is considered as a Court, established by the secular Power, and part of the Laws of the Land: And in this sense only can the King's Supremacy in all Causes and over all Persons be reasonably and consistently understood. And accordingly we find in the same History of the Reformation (f), a Declaration made of the Function and Divine Institution of Bishops and Priests, subscribed by the Lord *Cromwell*, the Vicegerent (g) in spiritualibus: The two Archbishops, eleven other Bishops and twenty Divines and Canonists, declaring that the Power of the Keys and other Church Functions, is formally distinct from the Civil Power, &c.—— And (h) we

(f) Hist. Reform. Addend. N. 5. p. 321. (g) In Spiritual Matters.

(h) Ibid. Col. Record. N. 10. p. 177.

we have there also the Judgment of eight Bishops concerning *the King's Supremacy*, whereof *Cranmer* was first, affirming, that *the Commission, which Christ gave to his Church, had no respect to the Power of Kings or Princes* : but that *the Church had it by the Word of God, to which Christian Princes acknowledged themselves subject*. They denied, that *the Commission, which Christ gave to his Church, did extend to civil Power over Kings and Princes* ; they own also, that *the civil Power was over Bishops and Priests, as well as other Subjects in civil matters, which the Church of Rome did deny*. But they assert, that *Bishops and Priests have the Charge of Souls, are the Messengers of Christ to preach the Truth of the Gospel, and to loose and bind Sin, &c.* — as *Christ was the Messenger of his Father* ; which surely was independent of all Kings and Powers upon Earth.

So then as our Laws now stand, the Church is wholly independent of the State as to her spiritual Powers and Authorities ; because our Kings claim no other Ecclesiastical Authority, than was granted by God to Kings in Holy Scripture ; and that was ordinarily no more than a mere civil Power, tho' exercised over Ecclesiastical Persons (who are subject as Christ himself was) to the civil Power in all civil things, and in Ecclesiastical Causes too, to punish with temporal Pains, as well Blasphemers, Idolaters and Hereticks, as Robbers and Murderers, as well the Transgressors against the first, as the second Table. This was all, that was ordinarily done by Godly Kings in Scripture ; this was the Supremacy given them by God, and no more than this is attributed to our Kings, as is fully expressed in the 37th Article, viz. *That only Prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all Godly Princes, in Holy Scripture by God himself ; that is to rule all Estates and Degrees, committed to their Charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and to restrain with the civil Sword the stubborn and evil Doers*. These are the Words of the Article,

To draw Precedents therefore from any extraordinary Acts of *Moses, David, or Solomon*, is a fallacious way of arguing ; because it is said, *such Prerogative, and such only as was ALWAYS given to ALL Godly Princes,*

Princes, viz. to restrain with the civil Sword. As to the Objection, that *David* ordered the Courses of the Priests and Levites, and *Solomon* thrust out *Abiathar* from being a Priest of the Lord, 1 *Kings* ii. 27. they were extraordinary Acts of extraordinary Persons. *David* and *Solomon* were both inspired Persons. The one a Prophet, the other a Preacher; and whatsoever they did by an extraordinary Commission from God, is no Precedent for the ordinary Power of Kings. Otherwise Kings may take upon them to preach, and to consecrate Churches; because *Solomon* consecrated the Temple, and called himself a Preacher, they may consecrate Bishops, because *Moses* consecrated *Aaron*; nay, they may write Scripture for us; because they did so. These extraordinary Cases therefore prove nothing as to the ordinary Exercise of Jurisdiction, and are no manner of Argument for the ordinary Ecclesiastical Power in Princes, though their civil Power may be exercised upon Ecclesiastical Persons, and in Ecclesiastical Causes. This was made in explanation of the Oath of Supremacy, and is a sufficient warrant to understand those Words in that Oath, where the King is said to be *supreme Governor as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical Things or Causes, as temporal*, to extend only to his civil Government, and the Power of the civil Sword. And this Explanation was made necessarily; for, as Bishop *Burnet* tells us (i), the Bishops opposed the Queen's Supremacy, as set forth in that Oath, and many others were offended at it. And therefore Queen *Elizabeth* laid aside the Title of *Head of the Church*, and instead of it used the word *Governor*, which is in use to this Day. This Article mentions Queen *Elizabeth's* Injunctions, which explain, and limit the Regal Supremacy in the same manner. The Lord Primate *Usher* gave the same Explanation of it in a Speech at the Council-Table at *Dublin*, upon the occasion of some Magistrates refusing to take it; and King *James I.* sent him a Letter of Thanks and Approbation of his Speech, both which are published, and none of our succeeding Kings

(i) Hist. Reform. Part. II. p. 326.

Kings or Parliaments have given any other Explanation of it, or required it to be taken in any other Sense. And these 39 Articles are incorporated into our Laws, and required to be subscribed by Act of Parliament. Whatever extraordinary Schemes therefore might be laid, and extraordinary Measures taken in the Reign of *Henry VIII.* they are all annulled by these later Explanations, which are confirmed by Acts of Parliament; from whence it is plain, that as our Law now stands, the Church is left wholly independent of the State, as to her purely spiritual Power and Authority.

And as the Original Rights of the Church are here asserted to be independant of the civil Power: so likewise her Authority in her spiritual Capacity is strongly asserted over all her Subjects, the King himself not excepted: So as not only to debar him from the Prayers and Sacraments, but to proceed to Excommunication, if other Methods prevail not, to bring him to open Penance for open Scandals. These are the Words in the second Part of the Homily, *Of the Right Use of the Church*; where, after having spoken of Christ's scourging the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, these Words follow: *And according to the Example of our Saviour Christ, in the Primitive Church, which was most holy and godly, and in the which due Discipline was used against the wicked, open Offenders were not suffered once to enter into the House of the Lord, or admitted to Common Prayer and the Use of the Holy Sacraments with the other true Christians, until they had done open Penance before the whole Church. And this was practised not only upon mean Persons, but also upon rich, noble and mighty Persons; yea, upon Theodosius, that puissant and mighty Emperor, whom for committing a grievous wilful Murder, St. Ambrose Bishop of Milan reprov'd sharply, and did also excommunicate the said Emperor, and brought him to open Penance.* Upon these Words there is a Marginal Note, to soften the Severity of this Sentence, viz. *That he was only debarred from the receiving the Sacrament, till by Repentance he might be better prepared.* But if this were all, both the Historians (k) *Socrumen* and (l) *Theodoret*, who related the Story in very strong

(k) *Eccles. Hist.* p. 316. (l) p. 316.

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strong and particular Language, and the Compilers of our Homilies must have been strangely mistaken. But, let who will comment upon these Words, they are confirmed by a competent Authority, and every Clergyman in the Nation obliged by Act of Parliament to subscribe them as a Part of the 39 Articles of Religion. And as they stand to this Day unrepealed, they are a sufficient Explanation of the Sense both of Church and State in this matter. And these original Rights have been thought and asserted by some of our most eminent Divines to be (as they certainly are) so essential to the very Being of a Church, that they are not to be alienated or invaded without Sacrilege by any Power upon Earth. The late Dr. Sherlock, the learned Dean of St. Paul's, in his *Summary of the Controversy between us and the Church of Rome*, says very emphatically, p. 219. *If Bishops will not exercise that Power, which Christ hath given them, they are accountable to their Lord for it: But they cannot give it away, neither from themselves, nor their Successors; for it is theirs only to use, not to part with it; and therefore every Bishop may reassume such Rights, though a General Council should give them away, because the Grant is void in it self.* And these we humbly presume are the real Sentiments of every Bishop in England.

Well! say you, and what of all this? Why then the just and natural Conclusion is plainly this, That, if the present contemptible State of the Clergy, and consequently of Religion, be principally owing to the Suspension of these original, inherent Privileges of the Church; I mean the Right of chusing their own Governors, and of meeting together in Synods to consult and make Laws for the better Government of the Society; the only way to remove the Effect would be to remove the Cause, and restore to them the Exercise of those Powers, of which they have (injudiciously at least to say no worse) been deprived. Bishop Burnet, in a Defence of his History of the Reformation, has this Remark on the Act of Supremacy: (m) *If the Letter of the Law or the Stretches*
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(m) Defence of Hist. Reform. Amsterdam. 1688. p. 20;

of it, have carried this farther, (viz. than when Queen Elizabeth's Explanation,) we are not at all concerned in it; but in case any such Thing were made out, it would amount to no more than this, that the Civil Authority had made some Encroachments on the Ecclesiastical Authority; but the submitting to an Oppression, and bearing it till some better Times may deliver us from it, is no Argument against our Church. And again (n), we may see in Godeau, and many other modern Writers, how much they complain of this as a Servitude, under which the Gallican Church is brought, and an Infracti^on of all the ancient Canons. And again (o), speaking of the Act of Submission, he says, *The Clergy did not bind themselves, never to meet without the King's Writ: They only said, The Convocation had ever been, and ought always to be assembled by the King's Writ, but it doth not bind them up from meeting, in case the Necessities of the Church require it, and that the King refuseth his Writ.* In which the learned Bishop plainly intimates, that from the Beginning things were not, as they are now, and hopes, that in due time they, who have it in their power, will be disposed to restore, what they unwarrantably detain, and settle every Branch of Ecclesiastical Authority upon the foot of Primitive Christianity.

You will say, perhaps, you see no manner of Occasion to expect or hope for such a Change, that things are in very good hands already. I entirely agree with you, that they are, and hope we shall never see them in worse. You will tell me, as you have often done, that we have had as excellent a Set of Bishops since the Reformation, as ever we had before it. I confess it, and impute it to the particular Blessing of Heaven, which has given us a Succession of gracious and religious Princes, who have made it their chief Concern to act agreeably to their glorious Character of *Defender of the Faith*. But as it has been ever thought good Policy to guard against the most remote Dangers; so we should think it an unspeakable Addition to our present Happiness to have these Points so effectually secured, that it should never

never be in the power of a weak or a bad Prince to employ to the Ruin of Religion those Powers, that have so long been wisely and happily exerted for its Preservation. Had the late King *James* sat long enough upon the Throne, it is not to be doubted, but he would have filled all the vacant Sees with Men of his own Principles, whom it is much to be feared the several Chapters would have elected without opposition. There is a strange Fascination in Royal Favour, and the *Wrath of the King is as the roaring of a Lion*. And no wonder, if Men, who have not the Spirit of Martyrdom, are either wheedled or terrified into a Compliance with the most extraordinary Measures of an arbitrary Prince. But, you will say, sufficient Care has been taken by the Legislature, to prevent the Return of such a Danger, by unqualifying any Popish Prince from inheriting the Imperial Crown of these Realms. True! but this is not the only Danger to which we are exposed. The best of Men, the greatest of Princes are mortal; and as the best and wisest of Men cannot foresee whether his Heir shall be a wise Man or a Fool, so neither can he know, whether he shall be a Christian or an Infidel, a Catholick or a Heretick. And this we may depend upon, that whatever Prince has the Power of filling the great Vacancies of the Church, will always take care to prefer People of his own way of thinking, and they of course will do the same with those below them, to the Dishonour of God, the Scandal of Religion, and the unavoidable Detriment of Church and State. And, if in the beginning of such an Attempt, the orthodox and faithful Clergy, who see the Approach of Infidelity or Heresy, and would gladly do their best to stop the Infection, and prevent the Ruin of the Flock, shall be forbid under the Penalty of a *Præmunire* to meet and concert proper Measures for the Defence and Security of true Religion, the unavoidable Consequence, must be an absolute Apostacy from Truth, and Establishment of Iniquity and Error, and the Guilt of all that dreadful Train of Consequences, which must ensue, will be deservedly fixed upon them, who did not exert the best of their Power to prevent it.

I expect to have it replied, that most Men, Princes especially, are too fond of Power, to give up any the smallest Branch, or grant any thing, that may seem to clip their Prerogative, and eclipse their Grandeur. But this, methinks is an awkward Compliment to a *Religious and Gracious Prince*. How can you tell, till you have tried? It will be time enough to sit down contented, when after a decent and proper Application they shall refuse to restore it. It is too severe a Reflection upon any Man of Honour, nay of common Honesty, to suppose, he would not readily give up any kind of Possession, if he can be convinced, that he has no Right to keep it. Now, if the Guides and Keepers of any Prince's Conscience could convince him upon Catholick Principles, that he is possessed of any Branch of Power, originally belonging to a distinct Authority we cannot doubt, but it would have the same effect as it had upon the late *Queen Anne*. She after the Example of her Royal Predecessors, had received the first Fruits and Tenths of all Ecclesiastical Livings, which having been unjustly usurped by the Pope as supreme Bishop, were at the Reformation, with other Branches of Papal Usurpation, vested in the Crown. But so soon as that pious Princess was by proper Application convinced, that they were purely an Ecclesiastical Due, she at once remitted them to be applyed to the Augmentation of poor Livings, many of which in the present low State of Ecclesiastical Revenues are hardly sufficient by the most frugal Management to support their Possessors, and especially such as have Families, from Poverty and Contempt. And why should we despair of the same Success, if the present Case were justly and fairly represented to those, whom it may concern, by proper Persons, and in the most decent and dutiful manner?

You will still say, that if the Choice of Bishops were left to the Episcopal College, you should not expect to see better Bishops, than have been made by the Crown. Perhaps not; but the Question is about the matter of Right. You and I perhaps might chuse as good a Set of Sheriffs or Deputy Lieutenants, as we see at present, but by what Authority? All kinds of Authority should run in their proper Channel, and there

can no manner of Reason be assigned, why one Branch of the Legislature should interfere with another, upon the mere Pretence of being better able to execute a Charge, that does by no means belong to it. If the Governors and Directors of the *East-India* Company should, in defiance of the *South-Sea* Charter, assume the Power of electing the Directors of their Company, or (p) *vice versa*, upon a vain Presumption that they could make a better choice for them, than they could make for themselves: What then? I leave you to draw the ridiculous Train of Consequences, that must inevitably follow. Or suppose the Election for both Companies were from time to time to be made by the King and Council, I fancy neither of them would advance a Shilling for prolonging their old Charter, or procuring a new one. But to return to the present Subject: If a *most Religious and Gracious* Prince could be convinced in Conscience that an Alteration of this kind were not only a matter of Duty, but of Interest and good Policy; if it could be made appear, that the returning this sacred Trust into its proper Channel, would contribute greatly to the Glory of God, the Interests of true Religion, the Honour and Security of the Crown, and the Peace and Welfare of the Publick, it would be too gross a Reflection upon the Understanding and Justice of any Prince, to suppose, that he would refuse to comply with it. And I am sanguine enough to imagine, that, if the Management of this Argument were in better hands than mine, it might easily be made appear to the Satisfaction of every impartial attentive Enquirer. One Consequence at least will be certain, that it would take off all that Obloquy and Contempt, which is unjustly poured upon the Clergy, on account of the Ignorance, base Compliances, and Immoralities of some of their Members, which (as Matters now stand) it is not in their power to prevent or cure, and fix it only on those, who have the Power to do both, and neglect to do it.

I fancy

(p) In their turn.

I fancy (my dear Friend) you are by this time sick of the Argument, I mean of my Management of it, and wish to see an end of it. Come, prithee, be easy for two Moments. I will trespass upon your Patience but a little longer, as our *Friend George* used to tell his Congregation, when he had preached half of them to sleep. Indulge me a little, whilst I try, if I can make good the following Points at least for your Conviction.

1. That this would contribute greatly to the Glory of God, and Interest of true Religion. 2. To the Honour and Interest of the Crown. 3. To the Peace and Welfare of the Publick.

1. The restoring every Branch of Ecclesiastical Power into its proper Channel would contribute greatly to the Honour of God, and Interest of true Religion, which are inseparable. That *God is a God of Order*, is the Voice of Nature and Reason, included in the very Idea we have of a *perfect Being*; and therefore cannot be the Author of Confusion. From the beautiful and regular Order of Things in this visible World, the wise Heathens inferred a necessity of an infinitely wise and powerful Mind, that contrived, directed and governed the Motions of this vast Machine. And we may as reasonably infer, that he has taken no less Care for the Constitution, Direction and Government of the moral World, than he has of the natural; and that therefore he must of necessity have prescribed, and ordered the several kinds and degrees of Authority, the different Ranks and Subordinations of Governours, necessary for the good Government of the Church, and the great and important Ends of its Institution, of which we can have no possible Knowledge, but from the Analogy of things, and the revealed Will of God. But an Unbeliever, that observes the present unnatural Blending of distinct Powers and Confusion of Characters would be tempted to conclude, that there is nothing more divine in our Church-Establishment, than in our City-Charter; and especially if he thinks he sees more Marks of Prudence and Regularity in the Exercise of one, than of the other; and that therefore all our Pretences to a divine Institution are a Cheat and Imposition upon Mankind. If we should convince him
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from the plain Letter of Scripture; and the uniform Sense and Practice of Antiquity, that JESUS CHRIST, the first Bishop, had left full and plain Directions for the future Government of his Church; if we should shew him particularly what sort of Authority he had left, and in whose Hands he had intrusted the Administration, and yet could not be able to convince him, that we acted agreeably to the Directions of our Charter, as understood for the first three hundred Years, after it was granted; he would scarce be persuaded to think, that we ourselves believed that divine Authority, which we so gravely preach to others, or that there was any thing in the whole Affair of a religious Establishment, but a solemn Farce, contrived to keep the sillier Part of Mankind in Decency and Order, which you and I well know to be the prevailing Opinion among the (q) *Beaux Esprits* in this as well as other Nations. If a sober discerning Deist could be prevailed upon impartially to consider our original Charter of Incorporation; should he observe, that the chief Power of choosing Officers, and enacting Laws for this Society was lodged in quite different hands, than by the said Charter is specified and directed; that instead of those Qualifications, indispensibly required by the said Charter for the distinct Offices of Society, he should see Men promoted without any regard to their moral Characters, or intellectual Accomplishments; but purely on account of some little secret Services, or some private Considerations, which both sides would blush to have publickly known; What would not such a Man think! what would he not say! And what could we say for our selves, I mean for those, who have Power to rectify Mistakes, to regulate Disorders, and reform Abuses, and yet neglect to do it! The Consequence must be an absolute Indifference and Contempt of all Religion and the Subversion of that Order and good Government, that entirely subsists upon it. And in this,

2. The Honour and Interest of the Crown is deeply interested. — It is an undoubted Truth, that the

(q) *Fine Spirits*,

best and truest Security of the Crown is founded in the Conferences of the Subjects: That neither Force nor Cunning are sufficient to keep Men within the due Bounds of Obedience, if they are not restrained by just Principles of Duty and Allegiance. If these are wanting, the Sons of Violence and Ambition, the Wrong-heads and the Wrong-hearts will never want Pretences for Murmur and Discontent, nor fail to attempt Changes and Revolutions, to gratify their Vanity, their Malice or Repentment, upon a tolerable Prospect of Success or Impunity. Whatsoever tends to destroy or weaken the Influence of Religion upon the Minds of Men, naturally tends to sap the very Foundation of Order and Government, and to destroy the best Support of Royal Power. But the Credit of Religion will always rise and fall in proportion to the Credit and Interest of those, whose Business and Office it is to support, adorn, and defend it. If therefore a Prince should ever be so misguided, as to promote such unworthy Persons, as shall disgrace the sacred Dignity of their Order, it must naturally tend to make Religion itself contemptible, and destroy all that Influence it ought to have upon the Minds and Consciences of the People.—Besides—

The superior Clergy, whose exalted Stations give them nearer Access to the Throne, may be considered as a Bench of spiritual Counsellors, Champions for Religion, Guardians and Advocates for the inferiour Clergy. But if ever those sacred Offices should be conferred purely as the Reward of a Train of obsequious Services to a Court, there would be but little Reason to expect that ardent Zeal in Defence of Religion, that unbiassed Integrity upon a trying Question, that undaunted Opposition to prevailing Vices and Errors, and that inviolable Attachment to the real Interest of their Prince and Country, which ought to be the distinguishing Characters of those exalted Stations. And because the Condition of most Princes is such, that they cannot so easily enter into the real Characters of the Croud of Expectants on such occasions, they will often be compelled to depend upon the Characters and Recommendations of those about them, who (it is to be feared) may not always be guided by such direct uncorrupted Views,

as to recommend Men purely for the sake of real and superiour Merit. And if a Prince be thus misled by others, though it may in some degree alleviate the Guilt, yet will it not prevent the unhappy Consequences of such unworthy Promotions. The weight of Government, even in temporal Affairs, is a heavy burthen, sufficient to employ the Time, the Attention, and Abilities of the greatest and wisest Prince upon Earth, and which without the immediate Assistance of the supreme Being, (I often think) could never be executed as it ought to be. Solomon thought so, who was himself a great and a wise King, when he tells us that by (Divine) *Wisdom Kings Reign and Princes decree Justice.* The Author of the Book of Wisdom denounces heavy Judgments on those who make an unrighteous Use of their civil Power. *Hear O ye Kings, and understand, learn ye that be Judges of the ends of the Earth, give ear ye that rule the People, and glory in the multitude of Nations ; for Power is given you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the most Highest, who shall try your Works, and search out your Counsels, because being Ministers of his Kingdom, you have not judged aright, nor kept the Law, nor walked after the Counsel of God, horrible and speedily shall he come upon you ; for a sharp Judgment shall be to them that are in high Places, for mercy shall soon pardon the meanest : but mighty Men shall be mightily punished. For he which is Lord over all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness : for he hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike, but a sore trial shall come upon the mighty. Unto you therefore, O Kings, do I speak, that ye may learn Wisdom and not fall away.* Wisd. vi. 1. Now if so severe an Account shall be given for the Exercise of temporal Power, and civil Authority, which is the Prince's peculiar Province, methinks it should neither be consistent with Policy or Prudence to add to his Burden by taking to himself a branch of Jurisdiction to which he has no direct or immediate Call, and making himself thereby responsible for all the Abuses of Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Authority. All Princes find themselves constrained by the Necessities of Government, to divide the Exercise of their Royal Power, by calling in the Assistance of

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proper Ministers to act under them in the several distinct Branches of the Administration; as the Armys the Fleet, the Finances, the Courts of Justice. So we humbly conceive it would be no small Ease to temporal Princes to devolve the Care of Ecclesiastical Affairs, upon the Episcopal College, whose peculiar Province it was thought to be in the first and purest Ages, to provide for the Necessities of the Church, or at least (after the Example of the late King *William*, upon a select Commission of Bishops appointed for that purpose; especially considering (as I shall hereafter endeavour to shew) that no real Advantage either to Church or State, no real Purposes of Government are served by the present Method.

And now if it does appear that the Glory of God, the Interests of true Religion, and the Honour and Security of the Crown, would be most effectually secured by such a Disposition of things, it must

3dly follow, That it will greatly contribute to the Peace and Welfare of the Publick: for these three Articles are inseparately united in the natural Course and Order of things. Where the Principles of true Religion are duly taught, believed, and practised, and all due Submission and Obedience to temporal Princes and Governors are paid upon Principles of Conscience; there seems to be little room left for Discord and Confusion, all is Harmony, Order, and Peace.——But you will say, perhaps that I am arguing upon a chimerical Supposition of a State of things not to be found in any Nation of the World. For that in all Christian Countries the Ecclesiastical Supremacy and Jurisdiction is vested either in the Pope or the Civil Magistrate, or divided betwixt both, as it is particularly in *France*. It may be so, nor can I, upon my own Knowledge, disprove it; but I am informed, that the Kingdom of *Sweden* is an exception, that the Reformation there, after all the violent Struggles and irregular Steps taken on both sides before the grand Design could be effected, was at last settled upon the foot of Primitive Episcopacy. That the King is perfectly absolute in all civil Affairs, yet leaves the Church entirely free in the Exercise of her spiritual Powers, particularly the Election

on of Bishops, in which he intermeddles not at all. And I have somewhere read or heard a remarkable Story of the late Heroick King *Charles XII.* His Father upon his Death-bed had desired him, that upon the Death of the Archbishop of *Upsal*, the only Archbishoprick in that Kingdom, he would use his Endeavour to have one particular Bishop, whom he named, and whom he much admired for his Learning and Piety, to be chosen in his room. Accordingly the young King exerted all his Interest for him ; but the Bishops well aware of the Consequence of accepting such Recommendations, rejected him and chose another. This the Religious Hero was so far from taking ill, that he excused himself on account of his Father's dying Request, for meddling at all in a matter that did not concern him. All wise Societies know the Danger of admitting the Recommendation of Superiours in the choice of their Members, but especially their Governours, and prudently guard against the certain ill Consequences that must unavoidably follow. And the good Effects of that Agreement are very remarkable in that Kingdom ; for they have there no Dissenters from the established Church of any kind, which is no small advantage to the civil Government ; in the next place, there always subsists an entire good Harmony betwixt the Church and State. The sacred and civil Powers are kept, as they are in their own Nature entirely distinct and independent, and so can never interfere ; and where there is no clashing, there must needs be an uninterrupted Harmony and Peace. And both sides find their Account in it, from the mutual Exchange of spiritual and temporal Benefits. The Church makes it her utmost Care to inculcate Principles of Loyalty and Obedience to the civil Government, with a peculiar Authority over the Consciences and Affections of the People ; and the King takes care to protect and defend the Church, which he knows to be the best Support of his Regal Authority. These are and ever will be the natural Consequences of this natural Course and Order of Things. Whereas the *Erastian* Scheme, wherever it prevails, is a perpetual Source of Jealousy and Contention, is big with Absurdities, too gross to be justified, and with

Consequences too terrible to be thought of, and too dangerous to be neglected.

Betwixt interfering Powers and clashing Interests, there must of necessity be perpetual Jealousies and Competitions. A King who is fond of Power, and happens to have a very moderate Concern for Religion, and the Interest of the Church (which is neither an impossible nor an invidious Supposition ; for what has been, may be) will be apt to look with a jealous Eye upon the most justifiable and legal Method of defending the one, and securing the other, as an Affront to his Crown and Dignity, and an Encroachment upon his Prerogatives : He will be apt to interpret the most dutiful Remonstrance into Dissaffection and Treason, as the late King *James* did to the Fellows of *Magdalen College*. On the other Hand, the Friends of the Church cannot help thinking, that the full Extent of Royal Power in the Government of the Church is an Encroachment upon her original and inherent Rights, and are therefore under perpetual Fears and Jealousies, that one extraordinary Step may produce another, and that those who have already exceeded the due Bounds of civil Authority, may determine to secure their Acquisitions, by suppressing every thing that may stand in their way, and instead of being *Defenders of the Faith*, and *nursing Fathers* to the Church, may encourage or connive at those who are contriving the Subversion of both. Now let any impartial Man consider what an unhappy Influence such a Train of Jealousies must have upon the Peace and Welfare of a Nation ; it naturally tends to weaken and destroy that mutual Confidence which ought to subsist betwixt the Prince and People, and which is one of the strongest Securities of any Government ; and when that once comes to be dissolved, all tends to Ruin and Confusion : The best and most laudable Designs are suspected, and the most innocent Actions misinterpreted on both sides. Neither Promises nor Oaths are believed or trusted, and neither side can think themselves safe but in the entire Suppression and Subjection of the other. The least Knowledge in History will inform us that this has been the ground of many terrible Contests betwixt the Church and the Prince, especially where

where he happens to be of a different Communion from the Established Church, and yet must have the disposal of Bishopricks and other Affairs of the Church under his absolute Direction, can set up Ecclesiastical Commissions in what hands he pleases, hinder Convocations from sitting and acting, and what not? Of which we have seen too many Instances at home as well as abroad, especially in *France* in the Case of *Henry IV.* Nay, and in many Cases where the Prince has been truly and zealously of the Established Communion, terrible Consequences have followed upon those mutual Jealousies of any unreasonable Stretch of improper Authority. Witness the *Holy League* against *Henry III.* of *France*, and the solemn League and Covenant (which was thence transcribed almost *verbatim, mutatis mutandis*) against our King *Charles I.* and the several Squabbles and Disputes betwixt Popes and secular Princes, about dividing the Spoil of Ecclesiastical Power.

The gross Absurdities that flow from this unnatural Blending of Powers and Confusion of Characters, are a sufficient Proof that this is not a natural incorrupted State of things; for to Reason *ab absurdo*, has always been thought good Logick upon any question. If Kings have this absolute Supremacy over the Church in their Dominions, how came they by it? If it be the inherent Privilege of the Crown, then it will follow that the Heathen Princes before *Constantine*, had the same Right to it, that he and his Christian Successors had afterwards. And that the Head and the Body should be animated by two opposite Spirits; and that the former should (contrary to the very original Law of Nature) attempt to destroy the latter, is too absurd to be imagined. But if Kings claim it as the Reward and Privilege of their being Christians, that is Members of Christ's Holy Catholick Church, another Absurdity will follow, that the same Person can be at the same time the Head and a Member of the same Body. The greatest Prince upon Earth is admitted into the Church by the same Sacrament of Baptism, as any other private Christian, and is thereby, as our Office of Baptism expresses it, engrafted into the Body of Christ's Church; and that the new incorporate Member should immediately

diately change its Nature and Position, and become the Head of that Body requires a particular Philosophy to explain or comprehend. Besides, a Prince who is incorporated into the Church by Baptism, and is by this way of reasoning become its Head, may turn Heretick, as *Constantius* and *Valens*, or Apostate as *Nero* and *Julian*, and how can he be the Head of any Church with which he has no Communion? Or how can any King be Head of the several different Communions of Christians, that may be tolerated in his Dominions? At this rate the Kings of *Great Britain* are Heads of the Episcopal Church of *England*, of the Presbyterian Church of *Scotland*, and the Popish Church of *France*, if they had the Possession as well as the Title of it. They may indeed be the Heads of an hundred different Churches or Communions, if there were so many in their Dominions, as to the civil or temporal Supremacy, and exercise of the civil Sword in *all Causes and over all Persons as well ecclesiastical as civil*. But to be the Ecclesiastical Heads and Governors, or to have any Ecclesiastical Power or Authority, is utterly inconsistent, and as great a Contradiction, as that all these Churches, Communions or spiritual Corporations should be one. They are all one Body in the temporal Sense, they are all Subjects, and so have all one temporal Head or Governour; but they cannot all have one Ecclesiastical Head or Governour, any more than they can be all one Ecclesiastical Body, or more than the same Person can be at the same time the spiritual Head of several distinct Churches or Communions.

And as the Notion is in it self absurd and contradictory, so nothing but a Miracle can prevent the unhappy Consequences that will one time or other naturally flow from the Practice; of which I shall mention three. The *first* is the utter Discouragement of sound Learning, sincere Piety, Contempt of the World, unfeigned Zeal for the Honour of God and true Religion, which are the necessary Qualifications for the Apostolical Office. So long as it shall be in the power of a Court to dispose of all the great and honourable Employments in the Church, it will be a constant Temptation to worldly and designing Men to recommend them-

themselves by all the little Arts of Flattery and Address to the Notice and Esteem of those who have the sole Power to prefer them. And as it is morally impossible for any Prince to enter into the Real Characters of the several Expectants upon every Vacancy ; so he will be compelled to accept the Characters and Recommendations of those about him, who in a Nation divided into Parties will most certainly recommend to the Royal Favour none but those who have most eminently distinguished themselves by their zealous Attachment to the Interest of the prevailing Party ; which a Prince, of course, is taught to believe is the Security of his own Royal Person and Family, and the Support of his Crown and Dignity. This naturally tends to debauch the Minds, and corrupt the Principles of the Croud of Seekers : They are tempted to despise and disregard all those intellectual and moral Excellencies, which are the true and only Foundation of real Merit, which they see disregarded by their Superiours, and have recourse to all the mean unworthy Arts of Venality and Prostitution ; which they observe to be the most successful Methods of obtaining Preferment. Whilst the Learned, the Religious, the Generous, and the Uncorrupt, who cannot come awkwardly to cringe at a Levee, who cannot adjust their Muscles to the Direction of their Patron, nor sacrifice their Understandings and Consciences to every Turn of a Minister, will be sure to fly from those Places, where they are sure to make a disagreeable Appearance, and shut themselves up from the Observation of those from whom at best they can expect nothing but Aversion and Dishonour.

And this cannot fail to produce a *second Consequence*, still more fatal and terrible. I mean the grossest Ignorance and Immorality among the Clergy, and an intire Contempt of Religion among the Laity ; which will quickly end in the Confusion and Distraction of Church and State. Bishop *Burnet*, in the forementioned *History of the Regal*, gives us several Instances of the dismal Effects of this unhappy Conduct. To this (a) he ascribes

scribes the intire Overthrow of the Greek Church, where it prevailed: *The Emperor*, says he, *took the Nomination of Bishops into their own hands, and then gave them either to such illiterate Monks, as were much esteemed of for the Strictness of their Lives; but were Tools for any Designs on which they set them, or to such of their Courtiers or Soldiers that had merited best at their Hands. And by these Means were the Greek Churches brought to that pass for Ignorance and Corruption, that it is no wonder they were given up by God to such terrible Calamities, as were brought upon them, first by the Saracens, and then by the Ottoman Family.* And again he goes on, (f) *In Andronicus's long Reign, many Bishops were put in and out, to the great Scandal of the Church: Of which the Historian (t) makes this Remark; Princes chose such Men to their Charge, who may be their Slaves, and in all things obsequious to what they shall prescribe, who may lie at their Feet, and not so much as have a Thought contrary to their Command. No wonder (continues the Bishop) he brake out into so severe a Censure, when many were raised to that Dignity who could neither write nor read.*

Now should we, or our Posterity, be ever so unhappy as to see the Clergy, by these or any other Means, reduced so low as to be contemptible in the Eyes of the People.

A *third Consequence* will certainly follow, ——— All the Enemies of Religion, Peace and Order, who have long looked with a malignant Eye upon the poor Remainder of the Revenues of the Church, and long to devour the poor Pittance that has hitherto escaped the Plunder of the Sacrilegious, will quickly unite to finish the evil Work, which their unbelieving Forefathers began. They will not only aggravate every suspicious Appearance, but even their own malicious Surmises, into a Charge of the highest Infamy and Guilt: and then the Bulk of the People who can only judge by Appearances and Impressions made by those whom they are taught to believe better Judges than themselves; they will hearken to every Calumny, and swallow every idle Tale

(f) P. 97. (t) Nicephor, Greg. L. 7.

Tale that may tend to ruin their Credit, and hasten their Destruction. This was the Case with regard to Religious Houses at the time of their Dissolution; the real Abuses in some, which ought to have been reformed, and the imaginary Abuses in others, which ought to have been impartially examined, the Ignorance, the Luxury and Immoralities charged in the gross upon all those Religious Societies, raised such an outrageous Spirit of Reformation in the Bulk of the People, that they readily lent a helping Hand to those who made the Cry of *Reformation* a Pretence and Cloak for the most outrageous Sacrilege, to the Dishonour of God, the Reproach of Religion, and irreparable Loss to good Learning. So at the Beginning of the *Great Rebellion*, the real Faults and Indiscretions, perhaps, of a few Church-men were aggravated by the malicious Artifices of the Factious and Discontented into an absolute Charge of insupportable Usurpation, Tyranny, Idolatry, Persecution, &c. — not only against the Persons, but even the whole Episcopal Order; whilst the Leaders of the Faction had nothing at heart but Power and Plunder, which they pursued without Shame or Remorse, to the Ruin of great numbers of most excellent and primitive Persons, and the utter Subversion of the established Church. And should it ever happen, for the Sins of this Nation, that the Ignorance, the loose Principles, the irregular Conduct, the immoral Lives of a few Clergymen, (who, perhaps, owe their Promotion purely to their Unworthiness) should be improved by the Enemies of Religion into a popular Charge and Clamour against the whole Order; you will quickly see the Harpyes flying to the Spoil, and the Learned and Religious suffering without Distinction from the lawless Rage of Infidelity and Sacrilege, for the Faults of their unworthy Brethren.

Add to all this, that if there be a God in Heaven, which ruleth over the Kingdoms of the Earth, which you, and I, and every sober Deist, must upon our own Principles believe and confess, and which none but a Fool can deny or dispute, it will then follow, that not only private Persons, but Nations and Communities shall be rewarded or punished according to their political

Merit or Demerit: But in their political Capacity they can only be rewarded or punished in this World, in which only they can subsist. It is therefore the usual Method of Providence to punish the Wickedness of Princes, the Iniquity of Courts, the Apostacy of the Clergy, and Irreligion of the People, by withdrawing his Protection from them, and delivering them up into the Hands of those, whom he hath appointed to be the Executioners of his Justice. (u) *For the Sins of her Prophets, and the Iniquities of her Priests, was Jerusalem the beloved City delivered into the hands of her Enemies, who shed the Blood of the Just in the midst of her, and led her Children into Captivity in an idolatrous Nation. And the present deplorable State of the Eastern Churches groaning under the Mahometan Tyranny, should be a sufficient Warning to others, not to tread in their Steps for fear of their Punishment.*

These terrible Consequences (we humbly presume) easily may, and only can, be prevented by restoring the Order and Discipline of the Church upon the foot of primitive Antiquity, and the universal Practice of the first and purest Ages, as we find them attested by their publick Acts and Monuments, which make the Election of their own Governors, and the Power of holding Synods upon proper Occasions, to be considered as her inherent and essential privileges; without which she can neither execute, nor preserve the spiritual Authority, with which she is intrusted, nor answer the great Ends of her Institution.

Against the first, many Objections have been, and still will be made by those, who are engaged by Interest or Prejudice to oppose the most reasonable Alteration. The First is, *That the Kings are Founders of all our English Bishopricks, and have therefore the undoubted Right of Patronage, to bestow them, as they please.*

This Objection has been urged by Men of Learning and Character; but without a due proof of the Fact, or Defence of the Consequence: Neither of which I take to be feasible. That there were *Christian Bishops in Britain,*

(u) Lam. 4. 10.

Britain, before there were *Christian Kings*, we presume, can hardly be disputed; and whatever Alterations Christian Kings might afterwards make as to the Places of their Residence or temporal Endowments, it makes but little alteration: because we humbly conceive, it does not appear by any Endowment now extant upon record, that any Prince ever stipulated in consideration of such Endowment or claimed for himself or his Successors, the Privilege of electing either Bishop or Abbot in exchange for the Temporalities, with which he had endowed any Bishoprick or Religious House in his Dominions. If any such Claim could have been found, it might have been reasonably expected in *Magna Charta*; where, after due Care had been taken for ascertaining the Privileges and Immunities of the Church, it is scarce to be doubted, but that the Prince, who granted it would at least have inserted a *Salvo*, for the Privileges of himself and his Successors, in so important an Affair as this; in which, their Silence may be justly considered as a Proof that no such Claim was ever made; and that we should, at this time of day, trump up a Title for them, to which they never made any Pretence, shews how much we are improved in Civility and Good-Manners to the Court, to which we owe our Preferments; and how little Regard we have for the Church, whose Ministers we pretend to be, and whose Privileges and Immunities we are bound to vindicate.

A Second Objection is, That they are *Lords of Parliament* and Privy Councillors, and enjoy many temporal Privileges annexed to their Sees, it is but reasonable, that the King should have the sole Nomination of them for the better Security of their Allegiance. To which it may be answered, it is highly reasonable that the Prince should have all possible Security for the Loyalty of all his Subjects, of whatever Rank or Condition soever, spiritual as well as temporal; and that the Bishops as well as others should have such reasonable Tests upon them, as may be thought necessary for that purpose.—For their Temporalities they do Homage and Fealty to the King, to whose Royal Bounty they confess them to be entirely owing. Suppose at the

same time, they were in a solemn Manner to renounce all Pretensions to civil Power in the Church, to limit or oppose, by secular Force, the Authority of the Civil Magistrate, though in sacred Things, or over sacred Persons ; yea, though they should think it unjustly exercised : what more than this could any Prince reasonably expect ? If he should for his further Security insist upon the absolute Nomination of such Persons, as had by a long Train of obsequious Services given him sufficient Proofs of an intire Submission to his Royal Will and Pleasure, he would find at last by sad Experience, this would in a great measure defeat the only real Benefit he could propose by such a Promotion. Their sacred Characters, as spiritual Guides and Confessors, as well as Privy Councillors, would oblige them rather to advise in Matters of Duty and Conscience, than blindly to follow the Direction of their Sovereign, and like the false Prophet of old (*w*), with one Mouth declare Good to the King, when they see him going into wrong Measures, to the Ruin of himself and his People. A Prince can have little reason to expect that they, who have sacrificed their Understandings and Consciences to obtain Preferment, will ever have Courage enough to hazard the Loss of his Favour by a religious Adherence to the Cause of Truth and Justice. A very moderate Degree of Knowledge in the History of our own Nation may convince any Man, that those, who have been Tools and Sycophants to obtain Preferment, will run any Lengths, and comply with any Changes, in order to keep, what they have got, or obtain, what they want, and would prove but miserable Comforters in a Day of Trial and Adversity. Whereas, a Person chosen to that exalted Station by the unanimous Vote of his Fellow-Bishops and Clergy, with the Prince's Royal Approbation, for his superior Knowledge, Greatness of Soul, and Sanctity of Life, would thereby give him the greatest Security, that he would scorn to mislead him by his Advice, Approbation, or

Silence

Silence into ill Measures, or betray or forsake him in the Prosecution of good ones.

A third Objection, which never fails to be made on this Occasion, is the setting up (*) *Imperium in Imperio* ; which is a mere Jingle of Words, without any Meaning. A Church absolutely independent of the State, in Things civil as well as sacred, would indeed be setting up one Power and Government within another, perpetually clashing and interfering ; which, without doubt, would produce nothing but Confusion. But whilst the sacred and civil Powers run, each in their proper Channels, they will be like two parallel Lines, that never can meet or interfere, but are perfectly consistent and assistant to each other. Every Crime is a Violation of the Laws of God, as well as the Laws of the Community. And every Criminal, considered as a Member of the Church as well as of the State, is in a different manner and on a different Account responsible to two distinct Tribunals, the one to punish the Body, and the other the Soul. Thus for *Treason, Theft, or Murder*, which are forbidden both by the Laws of God and Man ; neither their Sentence nor Absolutions are at all interfering, or inconsistent with one another. The Criminal may be pardoned by the State, and yet censured and excommunicated by the Church, Or he may upon his Repentance be absolved by the Church, and yet be punished by the civil Magistrate ; so that both may act independently, yet without Confusion. The Confusion arises purely from their exceeding the Bounds of their distinct Commissions ; when the Church pretends to controul or limit the Exercise of the Civil Power, or the State, to oppose and hinder the Spiritual Authority of the Church. The Papal Usurpations, therefore, were intolerable ; For the Bishops asserted the Pope's Power over Princes, even in temporal Things ; and by his command refused to pay Taxes or contribute towards the Support of the Government ; which was directly withdrawing their Allegiance from the civil Magistrate, and setting up a foreign

(*) Government within Government.

reign Power, superior to him in temporal Things, even in his own Dominions.

JESUS CHRIST therefore in the Foundation of his Church, although in spiritual Things wholly independent on the civil Power, yet gave her no Authority to clash or interfere with it. He declared, that his Kingdom (and by consequence theirs,) was not of this World. He gave, and commanded to give to *Cæsar*, all, that was *Cæsar's*; but the Things of God, and the Administration of his Spiritual Kingdom upon Earth he left in the Hands of his Church, for which she is justly accountable to none, but himself; and from the unnatural blending of these distinct Powers, arises all that pretended Confusion which is objected to the Exercise of an independent spiritual Authority.

And after all, we humbly presume, with the Consent of our Governors, that a Method might be found out, to prevent, or answer all these Objections, and to restore the Episcopal Rights, without any Prejudice or Diminution to the Royal Authority: So that both the Prince, the Clergy and the People may have their due Share of Power in the Election, and the Prince may have all the Security he can reasonably desire for the dutiful Allegiance of the Person to be elected. Different Schemes have in different Ages and Nations, according to the different Circumstances of Things, been proposed and practised for this End. The Council of *Arles*, *A. D.* 450. *Can.* 55. made a Rule, which for many Ages was followed by all the Western Churches, among whom the *British* were always reckoned; That to avoid *Ambition* and *Simony*, the *Bishops* should name three Persons, out of whom the Clergy and People should chuse one. In the next Century, the Emperor *Justinian* made a Decree (y) for the Eastern Churches, and as much of the Western as was under his Jurisdiction. That when a Bishop was to be ordained, the Clergy and chief Men of the City should assemble, and having taken an Oath upon the Gospels, to make an impartial Choice of three Persons well qualified, (whose Qualifications are particularly

(y) Nov. 123. C. 1, & 137. C. 2.

cularly expressed in the Oath;) *he of those three Persons should be consecrated, whom the Bishops, who were to ordain him, should judge the most worthy.* Another Expedient has been thought of in later days, as better suited to the State and Necessities of our Times, *That, when any Bishoprick is vacant, the Diocesan Clergy should present nine Persons to the Chapter; and that out of them they should present three to the King, of whom he should nominate one.* One great Objection against this Scheme is, That hereby the People are entirely excluded, and the Bishops have not that Authority in the Election, which in the most primitive Times they always had: but there is another, which I have heard proposed, and this I think seems less liable to Objection than any other; *That upon every Vacancy of a Bishoprick, the Convocation should meet and chuse eight Persons: The Upper House four, and the Lower House four. These should be presented to the Parliament: the Upper House should present their four to the Lords, the Lower theirs to the Commons; out of these the Lords should present two, and the Commons two to the King; out of which four his Majesty should nominate one.* By this Method both the Clergy, the People, and the King too should have a Share in all Elections of Bishops: There would be no Danger of having undeserving persons preferred to so high a Station; and Bishops, or those, who hope to be such, will be encouraged to obtain the Favour of their Country, by seeking the true Welfare both of Church and State; since there would be no other Way of arriving at that Honour. The only Difficulty in this Scheme, is to obtain the Consent of our Superiors, to put it in practice.

The Objections against the *second Branch, viz.* That of meeting in Synods, to consult and determine about Matters purely spiritual, to censure notorious Hereticks, Schismatics, and Unbelievers, to condemn profane and irreligious Books and Opinions, determine Controversies, defend and explain Articles of Faith, &c.—are I profess, I know not what. REASONS there certainly are, and such as our Superiors think of sufficient Weight, to justify the long Intermission of Convocations; and it would be Presumption in us to offer at any Conjectures about an Affair, in which we are
(and

(and we presume ought to be) entirely ignorant. We do not pretend to claim the Power of convening by virtue of any spiritual Authority, independent of the State. The Wisdom and Piety of former Kings have made a sufficient and legal Provision for the Peace and Interest of the Church and true Religion, by many solemn Charters and repeated Acts of Parliament. Give me leave to transcribe a notable Passage very apposite to our present Purpose, from the late Pious, Learned and Honourable Lord Nottingham's Postscript to his Letter to Mr. Whiston: *The Convocation (says he) is a Part of the Parliament, and as of right it must be summoned with the Parliament; so that summons will be rendered insignificant and nugatory, if they are not permitted to sit and act, in taking care of the flock of Christ, of which the Holy Ghost has made them Overseers, and which the Laws of the Land have committed to them; especially at a time, when the Doctrines of our most Holy Faith, and the Apostolical Institutions of our Church, are so virulently attacked, and in so open and insolent a manner. It was the Advice of Mæcenas to Augustus to suffer no Innovations in Religion; because the Peace of the State depended upon it: that Prince had Peace in all the World: but what Disturbances, what Miseries, Innovations in Religion have caused in this Nation, the History of the last Age informs us sufficiently: and how fatal the Feuds and Animosities, occasioned by the Pretenders to Religion, in this may be, no Man can foretel. Every good Man fears. Now whatever ill use has been made of the Text for suffering the Tares, which were sown by the Enemy to grow up with the Wheat; yet surely we are not to lay our selves to sleep on purpose, to give the Enemy an Opportunity of sowing them. The Jews reckon, they were forbid, even by the Law of Moses to revile the Gods of other Nations, which are no Gods: but that the Son of God, whom we and all Christendom adore, as the God of our Salvation, should be reviled, trampled upon, and put to open Shame by those of our own Nation, in contempt of the Laws of the Land, as well as of God, uncontrouled, without any Animadversion, without giving the proper Champions of our Faith an Opportunity, to refute and reclaim them for their Errors, is so unaccountable a proceeding both in Prudence and Religion, that I well*
hope

hope a speedy Remedy will be applied to it: and that those, who are in Authority, will free themselves not only from the Suspicion, but from the real Guilt too of being Partakers in other Men's Sins. For Qui non prohibet, cum potest, jubet; (2) and therefore that they will advise his Majesty to give the Fathers and Pastors of the Church leave to speak for themselves, and indeed for the King. For Defender of the Faith is not an empty Title. The Defence of the Church of England, and the Holy Religion professed in it, is the Foundation of the Revolution, and of his Majesty's Succession to the Throne. And after all our Experiments, this Church will be found to be, as was said of the Sanctuary, the Excellency of our Strength, and indeed of all the Protestants in Europe; who, as much as they want our Support, will have little Reason to think, we shall be much concerned for them, with whom in some Points we differ, if we shew but little Zeal for our common Christianity, in which we agree. I see, you stare at this long Quotation. But as this Noble Author was not only a good Christian and a good Scholar, but also a good Lawyer; his Authority in point of Law may give the greater Weight to his Reasoning upon the Principles of common Christianity.

The present deplorable State of Religion among us is not to be denied, or defended. The universal and indeed unavoidable Relaxation of Church-Discipline, and the scandalous Abuse even of that Shadow of it, which remains, gives us but a melancholy Prospect for the growing Generation. There are (it is true) yet to be seen in our Rubrick and Canons, such Words as *Discipline, Censure, Admonitions, Penance, Excommunication*; sufficient Indications of a Power once claimed, and exercised by the Governors of the Church. But alas! they stand there now as the melancholy Ruins of an old Fortrefs long since demolished, incapable of the least Defence against the Enemies of Religion. The Rubrick to the Communion-Service directs every Clergyman to admonish, and repel from the Communion, Men of vicious and scandalous Lives, and the Church-
M Wardens

(2) He, who doth not hinder a thing, when he can, commands it.

Wardens are bound by their Oaths to prevent such Offenders, that they may be punished. But considering the present State of Things, a Man must have the Courage of a Martyr, who dares put these Laws in Execution. Suppose for instance, that the greatest Reprobate in this City were for some peculiar kind of Merit preferred to any good Office ecclesiastical, military or civil, and should offer himself to receive the Communion as a Qualification; what in such a Case shall a Minister do? If he admit him, he is false to his Canonical Oath; if he refuse him, he is liable to be sued in an Action of 500 l. which may perhaps be the immediate Ruin of his Family. If he should escape that, it exposes him however to the keenest Resentment of the Person so refused, and by Consequence to the Vengeance of those great Men, who had been the Authors of his Promotion. I remember in the latter end of Queen Anne's Reign such a Case as this: The Clergyman, apprehensive of the Snare, applied himself to the Bishop of his Diocese (with whom I was then in Company) how to behave himself on such a trying Occasion. O (said the Bishop, you must without doubt follow the Direction of the Canon and Rubrick. But, my Lord (said he) I know the Temper of this Man so well, that I am sure he will sue me; and if he does, he will ruin me. I cannot help that (said the Bishop) the Rubrick and Canons are your Rule. But my Lord! (said he) will you use your Interest above, to indemnify me, in case I should be condemned to pay the Penalty? I cannot (said he) promise myself or you any Success, if I should attempt it. Why then (said he) I must comply even against my Oath and Conscience. Let me rather fall into the Hands of a merciful God, than into the Hands of an unbelieving unforgiving Reprobate. Was not this an hard Case! And may not this be the Case of every Clergyman in England! And is there no Remedy! Can there be no Medium between damning and starving? How must the Infidels laugh in their Sleeves to hear the learned Writers and Preachers of our Church talk of spiritual Authority, the Power of the Keys, which every little dirty Fellow in an Office shall defy you to execute? For shame let us be consistent, either
 repeal

repeal your Canons or your Acts of Parliament. If you pretend to communicate a spiritual Commission to the Clergy, and oblige them by a solemn Oath to execute it, and the whole Office is directed, and confirmed by repeated Acts of Parliament, let the Legislature, that enjoins this Canonical Oath, remove every Obstacle, that may lie against it, and find out legal Methods of Protection and Security for those, who have Honour and Courage enough to do their Duty, and enforce by the civil Authority all the Obligations of Morality and Religion.

I have often wish'd, that some Men of Learning and Leisure would give us a Compendium of the several Laws, which have been made in all Ages and Nations of the World, so far as History can inform us, in behalf of *Virtue, Morality, Justice and Religion*. We should certainly find, that not only among the politer and more learned Nations, such as *Egypt, Chaldea, Greece and Rome*, but even among the barbarous *Scythians and Americans*, it was thought an essential Point of good Government to secure by wholesome Laws and severe Penalties every Branch of Religious Duty to their false Gods, and every Article of social Virtue and Justice between Man and Man. And that Death or Banishment, corporal Pains or civil Incapacity, were the certain Punishment of those Crimes in Heathen Nations, which in Christian Countries are regarded as Instances of a *superior Genius, politer Taste, more impartial Enquiry and Freedom of Thought, innocent Gallantries, comical Adventures, dextrous Management, or superior Cunning*. Upon the whole, we cannot conceive it inconsistent with good Policy, and all the Purposes of good Government, to secure by wholesome Laws and severe Penalties, the Practice at least, if not the Belief of every Article of natural Religion, and of revealed too, so long as it shall be continued as the *Religion of the State*; and that Irreligion and Profaneness should be deemed quite as criminal, as Misdemeanors against the civil Government. Where would be the Absurdity or the Danger of making Blasphemy against God as criminal as denying or disputing the King's Title? Why should not the denying the Divinity of the Son of God (which is

an Article of the State Religion, and confirmed by repeated Acts of Parliament) be as heinous as denying the Legitimacy of any of the Royal Issue? Why not the profaning a Church, as striking within the Verge of the Court? Why not the Profanation of the Lord's Day (another Article of State Religion) as a contemptuous Affront to a State-Holiday? Why should not burlesquing the Bible (which is also an Article of the Religion of the State) be deemed as great an Affront to the Government, as the late Powder-Plot against the four Acts of Parliament? Why should not Atheism and Infidelity be quite as bad as Popery? Why should it be more meritorious to write in defence of the Ministry, than in vindication of revealed Religion? Why is it a Crime to be cool and indifferent in Politicks, and to be warm and active in defence of Religion? Are we under fewer or weaker Obligations to fear God, than we are to honour the King? Is it not as much the Duty of Princes (whom we acknowledge to be God's Vicegerents) to promote the Honour and Service of their supreme Lord, and the Interest of Religion, as to secure the Allegiance of their own Subjects, and support the Dignity of their Crowns?

Now with all due Submission to our Superiors, we humbly conceive, that if a Convocation were suffered to meet, and were confined to the Consideration of proper Remedies for the numberless Instances of Irreligion and Profaneness, which are daily and openly practised without Check or Restraint, which being approved by the Wisdom of Parliament, should be enacted into Laws by the Royal Authority, we cannot but think they would contribute as much to the Honour and Interest of the Prince, and the Peace and Welfare of the Publick, as some other Acts, which I could mention, which yet were solicited with as much Zeal and Application, as if the entire Welfare of the Nation had depended upon them.

But you will say, I am run from my Subject; how will this prevent the Abuses and Immoralities so loudly charged upon the Clergy? Patience, dear Sir, your own sober Reflections will convince you, that this is the proper and only Remedy. A Court influenced by these
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Counsels, and directed by these Principles; could not fail to effect an entire Reformation of all those Abuses, which the Enemies of the Clergy now so loudly complain of. What can be so likely to encourage among them an Emulation to excell, as to find that superior Merit is the only Recommendation to Royal Favour? and that Interest will prevail, even where a sense of Duty cannot, even their worst Enemies will acknowledge. This would compell them to have recourse to all the legal Methods, which the Favour of Princes, and the Laws of the Land provide for them, for the better Discharge of their great Trust, and the real Purposes of Edification and Order. A Convocation thus sitting under the Royal Protection, and the Favour and Good-will of both Houses of Parliament, might easily extract from the Apostolical and most Primitive Canons, such a Compendium of Duty, as should be a standing Rule for the moral and sacerdotal Conduct of all the Clergy, like the Statutes of the two Universities, or the Articles of War; the Violations of which should be cognizable and punishable by their proper Superiors.

Their proper Superiors, you will tell me, have something else to do, than to inspect the particular Conduct of every Clergyman under their Care. We own it, and therefore the Wisdom of our Forefathers have established two very necessary Offices in the Church for the more regular Exercise of Discipline, and Preservation of Order, which, though incorporate into our Laws, have for many Years, and for I know not what Reasons, been entirely laid aside, to the great Prejudice of Religion in general, the Decay of Discipline, and the Encrease of Deism, Heresy and Schism; I mean *Suffragan Bishops* and *Rural Deans*, which wise and good Men wish to see restored,

Suffragan Bishops were the same as the *Chorepiscopi* among the Antients. Bishops placed in Villages of the larger Dioceses, subject to the Bishop of the Diocese, in which the Village was, and could act nothing but by his Licence and Commission. *Du Pin* (a) tells us, that *Rabænus*, Archbishop of *Mentz*, one of the most

(a) V.l. 7. p. 164. 165. Annot. ad Can. 13. Concil Ancyran.

most learned Writers of that Age, which was the eighth Century, in opposition to the Council of *Ratisbon*, who had degraded them to the Rank of Presbyters, undertook to prove, that their Office was Apostolical, and believes that *St. Lerus* and *St. Clemens* were Suffragans to *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*. Our learned Bishop *Beveridge* (c) gives us a large and particular Account of the Nature and Antiquity of this Office, in which we are not so much concerned as in the legal Authority, by which this Office was settled and regulated in *England*. Mr. *Wharton* (c) says that the Office was brought into *England* about the middle of the seventh Century, not much above sixty Years, after Christianity was established among our *Saxon* Ancestors and continued to the Reformation. In the 26 of *Hen. VIII.* a Statute was made, that in twenty six Places there named, and in no others, Suffragan Bishops should be appointed; that they should be consecrated by the Archbishop and two Bishops, but that none of them should exercise any part of the Episcopal Office, but such as should be committed to them by the Bishop of the respective Diocese. And let any impartial Man judge, whether the reviving this Office would not be of excellent Use, especially in the larger Dioceses, and those immediately subject to the Archbishops, some of our Bishopricks are so large, that it is absolutely impossible for one Man to take that Episcopal Care of them, which is necessary. The Diocese of *Lincoln* has above twelve hundred Parishes, that of *Norwich* near as many. The Bishops of *Chester* and *Exeter* have very large Dioceses, so has the Archbishop of *York*, besides the Care of a Province. But be the Diocese ever so small, the necessary Attendance upon Parliament obliges the Bishops to be at least one half Year absent from their Dioceses, during which time they may not improperly be said to be left as Sheep without a Shepherd, which is no small Misfortune and Discouragement to the Parochial Clergy, who are so far from the Inspection, the Advice, and Countenance of their Superiors, upon very many trying Occasions. And if this be the Case of the Clergy

(b) Ang. Sax. Part. i. p. 150.

Clergy here at home, how much worse must it be with the Episcopal Clergy abroad in our foreign Plantations, who, let the Occasion be ever so extraordinary, can have no Communication with their Bishop without a tedious, dangerous and expensive Voyage, I remember a time when this Consideration was so warmly and affectionately represented to a great Minister, by a great and Excellent Person, to whom I had the Honour to be well known, that a (*-seeming*) Resolution, at least, was taken to constitute four Suffragans for the *West-Indies*; two for the Continent, and two for the Islands, and two for the *East-Indies*; and for this he had (as he thought) so solemn Assurances, that meeting me one Day in the Court of Requests, he told me with great Joy, that *now he thought he had effectually secured his darling Point*. How this hopeful Project came afterwards to be totally laid aside, well deserves the serious Consideration of those, (if living) by whose Neglect or Opposition it happened to miscarry. The Revival therefore of this Office would effectually remove one Scandal at least of the Reformation, which is the Neglect or Abuse of Confirmation, which the Friends of Religion lament, and its Enemies make a jest of. I could mention some amazing Particulars to my own Knowledge. But in general it may be said, that if this Office be acknowledged to be of Apostolical Institution, and one of the *Fundamentals of Christianity* (c); and which, if rightly and duly administred, would be of great Use for promoting all the real Purposes of Holiness in adult Persons, who had been baptized in their Infancy, I cannot help thinking, that it ought regularly to be administred every Year, beginning at *Whitsunday*, as that of publick Baptism was in the antient Church only at *Easter*. And it has often puzzled me to think why our both Canon, which supposes Suffragan Bishops, should order it to be administred only once in three Years. The Consequence of which is this, that when a Bishop keeps his Triennial Visitation, and a great Number of Parishes are obliged to attend at each Place appointed

(c) Heb. vi, 1, 2.

pointed for it, the Noise, the Tumult, the Indecency, with which the young People croud to the Chancel, looks more like the Diversions of the Bear-Garden, than the solemn Performance of an Apostolical Office. The great Numbers that attend, the Shortness of the Time allotted, and the manifold Avocations to other Parts of his Duty, must prevent that Decency and Regularity, which such Holy Offices require. Now if Confirmation be so holy, so necessary an Office as we are taught to believe; and as matters now stand, it cannot be so duly and regularly administered in all Parts of the Realm, as our Laws and Canons require; Suffragan Bishops constantly residing in the Diocese, supported by the comfortable Addition of the Office of Chancellor, or some other good Dignity, might visit and confirm through the whole Diocese by Commission from the Bishop every Year, reserving Ordinations and Institutions wholly to the Diocesan, except when he is hindered by some lawful Impediment, a Licence may be granted to the Suffragan to perform both these Offices, *(d) pro istâ vice.* Many other Advantages would arise from this Institution too tedious to mention: And this the Bishops themselves have Power to put into execution. For the Laws now in force give them Power to appoint Suffragans, and make Clergymen their Chancellors. Although I have heard Bishops themselves complain of the hardship of having Lay-Chancellors, when all the World knows, they may prevent it, if they will, and are so directed by the Canon Law. *Debet autem Episcopus circumspectus esse ne Laicum Vicarium sibi constituat, indecorum est enim Laicum hominem viros ecclesiasticos judicare, nec in imo eodémque Officio debet dispar Professio.* Lancelot. Institut. Jur. Canonic. Titul. 15 de Offic. Vicar. For although the Parliament allows Laymen to exercise spiritual Authority in England; yet it does not compell Bishops to give them Commissions so to do. The Design of that Act was only to authorize the Commission, which Henry VIII. gave Cromwell, when he made him Vicar-General

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General of all England; but I dare say the Parliament little thought the Bishops would so unanimously follow a Precedent, which was set up intirely for the Destruction of Church Government. Before the Reformation there were Suffragans in most parts of this Kingdom, and it is plain, that by the Act of 26 of Hen. VIII. they were designed to be continued after the Reformation; for by Virtue of it, as Mr. *Wharton* (e) tells us, *Tho. Manning* was made Bishop of *Ipswich*, and *John Salisbury* Bishop of *Thetford*, March 19. 1536. both consecrated by Archbishop *Cranmer*, and appointed Suffragans to the Bishop of *Norwich*. The same Year *William Moor* was consecrated Suffragan of *Colchester*: The next Year *John Hodgekins* of *Bedford*, and the Year after *William Finch* of *Taunton*. And in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, when the Reformation was fully settled, we find *Richard Barry* consecrated Suffragan of *Nottingham*, Anno Dom. 1567, and *Richard Rogers* Suffragan of *Dever*, consecrated by Archbishop *Parker* (f) 1569. How they came to be laid aside, we know not; but surely our Ancestors thought them useful, else we should not have had an Act of Parliament still in force for continuing them, and our latest Canons plainly suppose our Bishops to have Suffragans, when they appoint Can. 68. *That every Bishop or his Suffragan, in his accustomed Visitation, do in his own Person carefully perform the Office of Confirmation.* So that restoring this Office would be no Innovation or Alteration in our Constitution, but would rather be healing a Breach in it already made, for ought that appears upon insufficient Grounds, and by an incompetent Authority against the plain Sense of an Act of Parliament.

Nor would the Office of *Rural Deans* be less advantageous to the Discipline, the Order and Peace of the Church; but perhaps more so, as it would be an immediate Check upon the Ignorant, the Licentious, and the Immoral (if such there be) among the Parochial Clergy. In the extreme Northern and Western Dioceses, and throughout all *Wales*, where they are seldom

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blessed

(e) *Anglia Sacra*, Vol. I. p. 419. (f) *Wood's Athenæ Oxon.* Vol. I. p. 606.

blessed with the sight of their Diocefans, the Vifitations must be entirely left to the *Arch-Deacons*, or some *Official*, *Commissary* or *Surrogate*, where excepting the essential Articles of *Procurations*, *Synodals*, *Probates*, &c.—and a good Dinner, all the rest is matter of Form, without so much as a Possibility of knowing, or reforming the Abuses cognizable in their Courts. A negligent immoral Clergyman will always find honest Fellows for Church-Wardens, who will never tell Tales of the honest Parson ; and if any conscientious Clergyman of the Neighbourhood should think himself bound in Conscience to inform the Bishop or Archdeacon of the immoral Lives and scandalous Characters of any Neighbour, the accused Person could not long be a Stranger to the Name of his Accuser, who should from that Moment be marked out for a little snaking Informer, and be treated ever after with Aversion and Contempt. But this would be in a great measure prevented by the Office of *Rural Deans*. Their Office is not so ancient as that of Suffragan Bishops, though founded on the same Reasons and Necessities of the Government, in order to divide and lessen the Burden of the Episcopal and Archidiaconal Office. They accordingly appointed one of the fixed Parish-Priests of the Country to visit and inspect a certain number of Parishes, which was originally limited to ten (g) (in imitation perhaps of *Moses*, whose inferior Order of Governors were Rulers of Tens, *Exod. viii. 24, 25.*) as the *Romans* had their *Decuriones* in the lowest Rank of Military Officers. The Districts over which they presided, were called *Deanries*, into which all our Diocefes are divided, and the Persons presiding were called *Arch-Priests* or *Rural Deans*. Their Authority was not great ; however some Authority they had, and were subject to the Archdeacon, as well as to the Bishop. When the Bishops sent any Orders to the Archdeacons relating to the Clergy, the Archdeacon sent them to the Rural Deans, to be by them communicated to the Parochial Clergy. If a Clergyman were accused, it belonged to the rural Deans

(g) Lindwood. Prov. Tit. de constitut. c. 1. verb. Decan. rural.

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Deans to cite him, to answer to the Accusation, or any other Person obnoxious to the spiritual Jurisdiction. This very useful Office is now almost every where laid aside; in some few Dioceses they are chosen by the Clergy at their visitations to be only annual Officers, and their whole Business is to make an Entertainment for their Brethren. But surely, if this Office were regularly kept up and duly exercised, it would contribute as much as any thing to restore the Discipline of the Church, and reform the Abuses complained of among the Parochial Clergy. Suppose some Clergyman of eminent Learning, Piety and Prudence were constituted by the Bishop * *Quamdiu se bene gesserit*; he might visit all the Parsonage and Vicaridge-Houses in his Deanry once a Year, and observe in what Repair they are kept; and when he finds any thing amiss, might give Orders to have it rectified, and have Power to impose some light Censure on those, who neglect the Admonition; and if that prove insufficient, to acquaint the superior Ordinary with it. He might also be empowered to admonish any of his Clergy, who live disorderly, first by himself alone, and then in the Presence of two or three of his Brethren, and upon Non-amendment to suspend him † *ab officio* for a Month; and if that prove ineffectual, to acquaint the Archdeacon or Bishop, that some further Course might be taken. He might also convene his Clergy at least twice every Year, where, after a Sermon preached, they might confer together about the Concerns of their Ministry and the Affairs of their Parishes, and many other Advantages might accrue to the Publick, and many Disorders prevented or reformed, which some People are willing to have it thought are incurable.

I can recollect but one Article more, that is too often thought to render the Clergy contemptible, that is their *Poverty*, an Article, which like the rest they have it not in their Power to prevent or reform, and which it concerns the Possessors of impropriate and appropriate Tythes seriously to consider. If they think not them-

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selves

* So long as he shall have behaved himself well. † From his Office.

selves bound to restore them entirely to the Uses, for which the Laws of God and the Practice of all *Christian*, yea and *Heathen Nations* (a) have allotted them; yet let them make such a decent and competent Allowance for their poor Vicars, that they, who serve at the Altar, may live by the Altar far above Poverty and Contempt. This is a tender Point, which I shall leave to the Consideration of those, whom it may concern, recommending to their Perusal Sir *Harry Spellman's History of Sacrilege*, and Bishop *Kennet's History of Impropriations*, from whom I shall transcribe two very excellent Speeches relating to this Subject; which I am sure you, who are as good a Judge of Rhetorick as of Logick, will think to be admirable in their Kind; the one spoken by Sir *Benjamin Rudyard* in the House of Commons 1628, the other by Archbishop *Whitgift* to Queen *Elizabeth*; which although first in order of Time, shall come last, as in all Processions the little Folks go first, to make way for their Betters.

The first Speech was spoken upon occasion of a Bill in the House of Commons for Augmentation of Ministers Livings, and is as follows.

Mr. *P Y M*,

‘ I Did not think to have spoken again to this Bill, because I was willing to believe, that the Forwardness of this Committee would have prevented me; but now I do hold my self bound to speak, and to speak in earnest.

‘ In the first Year of the King, and the second Convention, I first moved for the Increase and enlarging of poor Ministers Livings. I shewed how necessary it was to be done; how shameful it was, that it had been so long neglected: This was also commended to the House by his Majesty.

‘ There were then (as now) many Accusations on foot against scandalous Ministers: I was bold to tell the House, that there were scandalous Livings too, which were much the Cause of the other: Livings
of

(a) *Vid.* Archbishop *Potter's Discourse of Church-Government*, p. 428, 429.

of five Marks, and five Pounds *per Annum*; that Men of Worth and good Parts would not be muzzled up to such Pittances; that there were some Places in *England*, which were scarce in Christendom, where God was little better known than among the *Indians*. I exampled it in the uttermost Parts of the North, where the Prayers of the Common People are more like Spells and Charms than Devotions; the same Blindness and Ignorance is in divers Parts of *Wales*, which many of that Country do both know, and lament.

I declared also, That to plant good Ministers in good Livings, was the strongest and surest Means to establish true Religion; that it would prevail more against Papistry, than the making new Laws, or executing of old; that it would counterwork Court-Connivance, and lukewarm Accommodation: that although the Calling of Ministers be never so glorious within, yet outward Poverty will bring Contempt upon them, especially among those, who measure Men by the Acre, and weigh them by the Pound, which is, indeed, the greatest Part of Men.

Mr. *Pym*; I cannot but testify how, being in *Germany*, I was exceedingly scandalized to see the poor stipendiary Ministers of the reformed Churches there, despised and neglected by reason of their Poverty, being otherwise very grave and learned Men. I am afraid, that this is a Part of the Burden of *Germany*, which ought to be a Warning to us. I have heard many Objections and Difficulties, even to Impossibilities against this Bill. To him, that is unwilling to go, there is ever a Bear or a Lion in the way. First, Let us make our selves willing, then will the way be easy and safe enough. I have observed, we are always very eager and fierce against Papistry, against scandalous Ministers, and against Things, that are not in our Power. I shall be glad to see, that we did delight as well in rewarding, as in punishing, and in undertaking Matters within our Reach, as this is absolutely within our Power; our own Duty is next, and other Men's is farther off.

I do

‘ I do not speak this, that I dislike the destroying
 ‘ and pulling down of that, which is ill; but then let
 ‘ us be as earnest to plant and build up that, which is
 ‘ good in the room of it: for why should we be deso-
 ‘ late? The best and nearest way to dispell Darknes
 ‘ is to let in Light. We say, that Day breaks, but
 ‘ no Man ever heard the Voice of it. God comes in
 ‘ the *still Voice*: Let us quickly mend our *Candlesticks*,
 ‘ and we cannot want Light.

‘ I am afraid this Backwardness of ours will give our
 ‘ Adversaries Occasion to say, that we choose our Re-
 ‘ ligion because it is the cheaper of the two; and that
 ‘ we would willingly serve God of that, which shall cost
 ‘ us nought. Believe me, Mr. *Pym*, he that thinks to save
 ‘ any thing by his Religion, but his Soul, will be a terri-
 ‘ ble Loser in the End. We sow sparingly, and that is the
 ‘ Reason we reap so sparingly, and have no more Fruit.
 ‘ Methinks whoever hates Papistry, should, by the
 ‘ same Rule, hate Covetousness, for that is Idolatry
 ‘ too. I never liked hot Professions and cold Actions.
 ‘ Such a Heat is rather the Heat of Distemper and Dis-
 ‘ ease, than of Life and saving Health.

‘ For *scandalous Ministers*, there is no Man shall be
 ‘ more sincerely forward to have them punished, than
 ‘ I will be; when *Salt has lost it's savour*, let it be cast
 ‘ out upon the unsavoury Place, the *Dunghil*. But, Sir,
 ‘ let us deal with them, as God hath dealt with us.
 ‘ God, before he made Man, made the World a com-
 ‘ fortable Place for him to dwell in. So let us provide
 ‘ them a competent Living, and then punish them in
 ‘ God's Name: But till then *scandalous Livings cannot*
 ‘ *but have scandalous Ministers*. It shall ever be a Rule
 ‘ to me, that, where the Church and Commonwealth
 ‘ are both of one Religion, it is comely and decent,
 ‘ that the outward Splendor of the Church should hold
 ‘ a Proportion, and participate with the Prosperity of
 ‘ the Temporal State; for why should we dwell in
 ‘ *Houses of Cedar*, and suffer God to dwell in *Skins*.

‘ It was a glorious and religious Work of King
 ‘ *James*; I speak it to his unspeakable Honour, and to
 ‘ the Praise of that Nation, who although their Coun-
 ‘ try be not so rich as ours, yet are they richer in their

‘ Affections

Affections to Religion: Within the Space of one
 Year he caused to be planted Churches throughout all
 Scotland and the Borders, each worth 30 *l.* a Year,
 with a House and some Glebe belonging to them;
 which 30 *l.* a Year, considering the Cheapness of the
 Country, and the modest Fashion of Men's living
 there, is worth double as much as any where within
 one hundred Miles of *London*. The printed Act
 and Commission, whereby it was executed, I have
 here in my Hand, delivered to me by a noble Gen-
 tleman of that Nation, and a worthy Member of
 this House, *Sir Francis Stewart*.

To conclude, although the Christian Religion be
 established generally throughout this Kingdom; yet,
 till it be planted more particularly, I shall scarce
 think this a Christian Commonwealth; and seeing it
 hath been moved and stirred in Parliament, it will
 be heavy upon Parliaments, till it be effected. Let
 us do something for God here of our own; and no
 doubt God will bless our Proceedings in this Place
 for ever after. And for my own Part, I will never
 give over soliciting this Cause, as long as Parliaments
 and I shall live together.

The following Speech of Archbishop *Whitgift* was
 spoken on this Occasion, as *Mr. Walton* tells us in the
 Life of *Mr. Hooker*. Not many Years before *Dr.*
Whitgift was made Archbishop of *Canterbury*, there
 passed an Act of Parliament, intending the better Pre-
 servation of the Church Lands; by recalling a Power,
 that was vested in others to sell, or lease them, by
 lodging and trusting the future Care and Protection of
 them only in the Crown: and among many, who
 made a bad Use of this Power and Trust of the Queen's,
 the Earl of *Leicester* was one; and the Bishop having
 by his Interest with her Majesty, put a Stop to the Earl's
 sacrilegious Designs, they two fell to an open Opposi-
 tion before her; after which they both quitted the Room,
 not Friends in Appearance. But the Bishop made a
 sudden and seasonable Return to her Majesty; (for he
 found her alone) and spoke to her with great Humility
 and Reverence, to this Purpose:

I beseech

' I beseech your Majesty to hear me with Patience,
 ' and believe, that your's and the Church's Safety are
 ' dearer to me than my Life, but my Conscience,
 ' dearer than both; and therefore give me leave to do
 ' my Duty, and tell you, that *Princes are deputed Nur-*
 ' *sing Fathers of the Church, and owe it their Protection;*
 ' and therefore God forbid you should be so much as
 ' passive in her Ruins, when you may prevent it; or
 ' that I should behold it without Horror and Detesta-
 ' tion, or should forbear to tell your Majesty of the
 ' Sin and Danger of Sacrilege. And although you
 ' and myself were born in an Age of Frailties, when
 ' the primitive Piety and Care of the Church-Lands
 ' and Immunities are much decayed; yet (*Madam*) let
 ' me beg, that you would first consider, that there are
 ' such Sins, as *Prophaneness* and *Sacrilege*; and that if
 ' there were not, they could not have Names in Holy
 ' Writ, and particularly in the New Testament. And
 ' I beseech you to consider, that although our Saviour
 ' said, *He judged no Man*; and to testify it, would not
 ' judge nor divide the Inheritance between the two
 ' Brethren, nor would judge the Woman taken in
 ' Adultery; Yet in this Point of the Church's Rights
 ' he was so zealous, that he made himself both the
 ' Accuser and the Judge, and the Executioner too, to
 ' punish these Sins; witnessed in that he himself made
 ' the Whip to drive the Prophaners out of the Tem-
 ' ple, overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers,
 ' and drove them out of it. And I beseech you to
 ' consider, that it was *St. Paul*, who said to those
 ' Christians of his Time who were offended with Ido-
 ' latry, *Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacri-*
 ' *lege?* And to incline you to prevent the Curse, that
 ' will follow it, I beseech you also to consider, that
 ' *Constantine* the first Emperor, and *Helena* his Mother;
 ' that King *Edgar* and *Edward* the Confessor, and in-
 ' deed many other of your Predecessors, and many
 ' private Christians, have also given to God and his
 ' Church much Land and many Immunities, which
 ' they might have given to those of their Families, and
 ' did not: but gave them for ever as an *absolute Right*
 ' and *Sacrifice to God*; and with these Immunities and
 ' Lands,

‘ Lands, *they have entailed a Curse upon the Alienators of them.* God prevent your Majesty and your Successors from being liable to that Curse, which will cleave unto Church Lands as the Leprosy to the Jews.

‘ And to make you, that are trusted with their Preservation the better to understand the Danger of it, I beseech you forget not, that to prevent those Curses, the Church’s Land and Power have been also endeavoured to be preserved (as far as human Reason, and the Law of this Nation have been able to preserve them) by an immediate and most sacred Obligation on the Consciences of the Princes of this Realm: For they, who consult *Magna Charta* shall find, that as all your Predecessors were at their Coronation, so you also were sworn before all the Nobility and Bishops then present, and in the Presence of God, and in his Stead to him, that anointed you, *to maintain the Church Lands and the Rights belonging to it*; and this you yourself have testified openly to God at the Holy Altar, by laying your Hands on the Bible, then lying upon it: and not only *Magna Charta*, but many other modern Statutes have denounced a Curse upon those, who break *Magna Charta*. A Curse like the Leprosy, that was entailed upon the Jews; for as that, so these Curses, have and will cleave to the very Stones of those Buildings, that have been consecrated to God; and the Father’s Sin of Sacrilege, hath and will prove to be entailed on his Son and Family. And now, *Madam*, what Account can be given for the Breach of this Oath at the last great Day, either by your Majesty, or by me, if it be wilfully, or but negligently violated, I know not.

‘ And therefore (*Good Madam*) let not the late Lord’s Exceptions against the Failings of some few Clergymen, prevail with you, to punish Posterity for the Errors of this present Age; let particular Men suffer for their particular Errors; but let God and his Church have their Inheritance: And, although I pretend not to prophesy, yet I beg Posterity to take Notice of what is already become visible in many Families; *That Church Land added to an ancient and just Inheritance, hath proved like a Moth fretting a Gar-*

‘ ment, and secretly consumed both: or like the Eagle, that
 ‘ stole a Coal from the Altar, and thereby set her Nest on
 ‘ fire, which consumed both the young Eagles, and herself,
 ‘ that stole it. And, although I shall forbear to speak
 ‘ reproachfully of your Father, yet I beg you to take
 ‘ notice, that a Part of the Church Rights, added to
 ‘ the vast Treasure, that was left him by his Father,
 ‘ hath been conceived to bring an unavoidable Consump-
 ‘ tion upon both, notwithstanding all his Diligence to
 ‘ preserve them.

‘ And consider, that after the Violation of those
 ‘ Laws, to which he had sworn in *Magna Charta*,
 ‘ God did so far deny him his restraining Grace, that
 ‘ as King *Saul*, after he was forsaken of God, fell from
 ‘ one Sin to another; so he, till at last he fell into
 ‘ greater Sins than I am willing to mention. Madam;
 ‘ RELIGION IS THE FOUNDATION AND CEMENT
 ‘ OF HUMAN SOCIETIES. And when they, who
 ‘ serve at God’s Altar, shall be exposed to Poverty,
 ‘ then Religion itself will be exposed to Scorn, and be-
 ‘ come contemptible, as you may already observe it to
 ‘ be in too many poor Vicaridges in this Nation. And
 ‘ therefore as you are by a late Act or Acts of Parlia-
 ‘ ment entrusted with a great Power to preserve or
 ‘ waste the Church’s Lands, yet dispose of them for
 ‘ *Jesus’ Sake as you have promised to Men, and vowed to*
 ‘ *God; that is, as the Donors intended.* Let neither
 ‘ Falshood nor Flattery beguile you to do otherwise;
 ‘ but put a Stop to God’s and the Levite’s Portion (I
 ‘ beseech you) and to the approaching Ruins of his
 ‘ Church, as you expect Comfort at the last great Day;
 ‘ for KINGS MUST BE JUDGED. Pardon this affec-
 ‘ tionate Plainness, *my most Dear Sovereign*, and let me
 ‘ beg to be continued in your Favour, and the Lord
 ‘ still continue you in his.

*Bishop Smallbrook in his Dedication to the King, in his
 Vindication of the Miracles of Jesus Christ.*

‘ God be thanked, the publick Exigencies have
 ‘ found a Resolution in your Majesty suitable to so cri-
 ‘ tical an Occasion, to put a Stop to *innovating Schemes*,

as you have lately expressed from the Throne your earnest Desire, that all Orders of Men may enjoy quietly and unenvied the Rights, Privileges, and Indulgencies, which by Law they are intitled to, and that no Innovations may disturb any Part of your Subjects in the Possession of their legal Property. - A Declaration, that not only became the Character of the Father of your People, but will, we trust, be so effectually confirmed by your Royal Authority as to frustrate the Designs of those who do not seem to be sufficiently apprized, that Ecclesiastical Rights and Liberties are no small Part of our Constitution, and that there is such a thing as Property in the Church, as well as in the State, and indeed, that both of them are equally supported by Law, and by your Majesty's most just and gracious Government.

And as your Majesty, by your late Declaration to your Parliament, has given with the greatest Wisdom a seasonable Check to such Innovations as have a Tendency to interrupt the Felicities of your Reign ; so is there so strict a Connexion between the Preservation of the Rights of the Monarchy, and those of the Episcopal Order and Clergy among us, between the Happiness of your Majesty and the Prosperity of your Kingdoms, that we cannot but entertain the most reasonable Hopes, that the steady Prosecution of your Royal Declaration will be a lengthening of the Tranquility of your Reign, and the Stability of your Times both in Church and State.

But I find I begin to grow serious, and you are beginning to nod over this tedious Epistle, which gives me great Hope, that if it prove nothing else, it will prove a good Opiate to you ; and so I heartily wish you a good Night, and am,

Dear S I R,

Yours,

George II,

F I N I S,



POSTSCRIPT.

The Reader is desired to take Notice, that the following Paragraph should have been inserted in Page 44 ; but as the M. S. was mislaid, we hope, it will not be amiss to conclude with it.

The Knowledge of the Laws was, and still must be esteemed a necessary Branch of Learning for all Clergymen, at least so long as any *Jurisdiction* is annexed to Spiritual Dignities. Every private Clergyman in Cases of Conscience, and many Disputes frequently referred to him will find this useful, and particularly all Clergymen, who are, or probably may be promoted to certain Dignities in the Church, must judge it absolutely necessary. In all those Jurisdictions (the *Episcopal* especially) some of the most tender and valuable Interests of whole Communities are concerned, and therefore a competent Knowledge of Laws by which Ecclesiastical Proceedings are conducted, formerly was, and still must be thought one of the necessary Qualifications for those high Offices: And as it is no Time for a Man advanced to the Dignity of a Judge to begin to learn, when the Duties of his Place call for immediate Action, and as Vicars, Surrogates and Deputies of all Kinds were never designed to take upon them the whole and sole Execution, but just such a Part of it as proved too great and burthensome to the Judge himself to execute, so proper Care was taken of a certain Preparation for those Offices. To this End, not only did the natural Course of their Studies, but also certain Privileges of Law and Law-Courts, and the Chances and Hopes of Promotion to those Jurisdictions greatly conduce. The Spiritual Courts always lay open to them, not only to improve

P O S T S C R I P T.

improve by Learning, but being actually concerned, pleading their own, and their respective Churches Causes, the Causes of the Poor, and whatever other Persons they were pleased to account distressed and miserable; and this not by any formal *Admission*, but by a *Right* inherent to Holy Orders. By some or other of those Means they were always in some Measure prepared for the Places of greater Power and Trust, and were better able to defend their own and their Churches Rights, than others unacquainted with the Laws, who can hardly fail of suffering less or more by that material Defect. What has been said concerning the Privileges of *Clergymen* in Ecclesiastical Courts, may sound harsh to some hasty Enquirers into Councils, Synods and Canon-Laws; who of late Years have advanced a favourite Opinion; that the *Office of an Advocate and a Clergyman are incompatible*; and by the same Kind of New-Light did OLIVER's deep Civilians and Canonists give it as Law and Gospel too, that Jurisdiction of all Kinds was inconsistent with the Office of a *Bishop*, which both Law, Reason and Experience have long since disproved. And certainly the very same Reasons, that induced the Legislature to restore and confirm Bishops, and other Dignitaries in their Jurisdictions, consequently do not only allow, but naturally invite and encourage all, who are in a Capacity of being Candidates for those Dignities, to inform themselves in the Laws peculiar to the Jurisdictions annexed, and (as their Genius or just Interest leads them) to act with as much Consistency in the Advocative, as at last in a judicial Capacity in the same Court: Many Men and Books are mistaken if there be any one clear Decision of Law against it, or Canon of any one Council properly so called. And after all, there is little or nothing in it worth contending for, especially ever since the almost general (and I cannot help saying unnatural) Alienation of Preferment in that Branch for many Years past, which the Church will one Day feel and lament. Amongst others there is one *Mortification* the Clergy with Reason complain of: Not only in private Conversations, but in publick Papers they ever come in for a plentiful

Share

POSTSCRIPT.

Share of the Reproaches justly or unjustly cast upon Ecclesiastical Courts, which proceeds from a mere vulgar Error, that the Clergy have any thing to say to them, which indeed they have not, nor do I see how the Body of the Clergy at this Day can be thought concerned in either the Conduct or Fate of those Courts: While they were in the Hands of Ecclesiasticks, Ecclesiasticks were answerable; but for what has been since thought amiss in them, let People apply to the *proper* Officers.

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